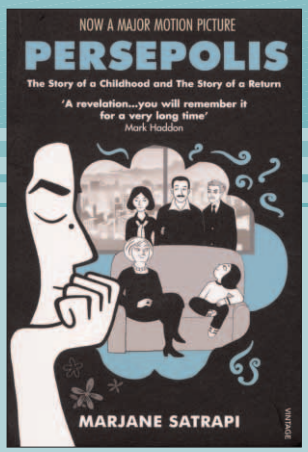
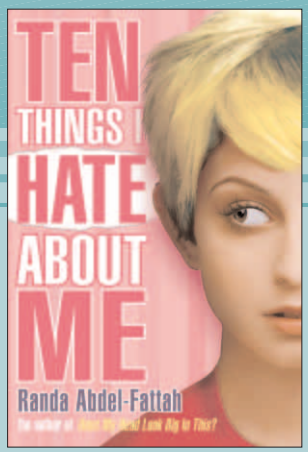
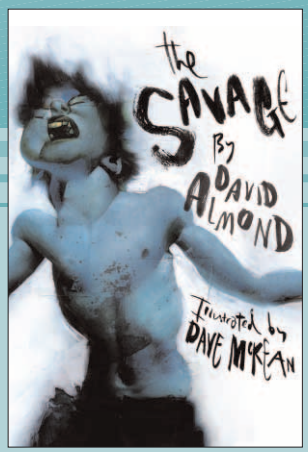
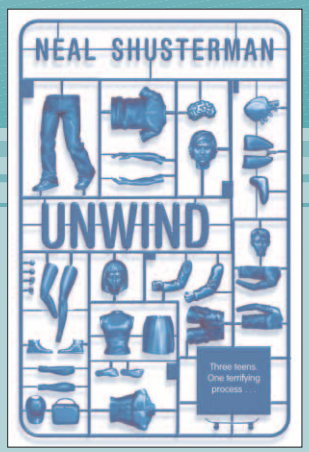
Riveting Reads plus

Everyone's READING 11–18









EILEEN ARMSTRONG

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About the Authors

Eileen Armstrong, who wrote the list, is the school librarian at Cramlington Learning Village in Northumberland. Formerly Chair of the School Library Association, she is also the author of *Fully Booked: Reader Development and the Secondary School LRC* in the SLA Guidelines series and has contributed to the popular Ultimate Book and Teenage Book Guides. A regular book reviewer for the professional press, she also delivers highly interactive training courses in the UK and abroad, helping librarians and teachers enthuse students of all ages about books and create reading schools. As well as establishing the North East Book Awards, she is also responsible for introducing the Kids' Lit Quiz to the UK from New Zealand and is currently UK KLQ Co-ordinator. She is the author of *Riveting Reads 12–16*, *Riveting Reads 16–19* and *Boys into Books 11–14,* also published by SLA.

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Alec Williams, who wrote the introduction, has had many years' experience managing school library services in Chester, Lancashire, Calderdale and Leeds. A former SLA Chair, and an Honorary Member of CILIP's Youth Libraries Group, he now works freelance, providing training and consultancy, and is a frequent speaker at meetings and conferences: one delegate described him as 'helpful, up-cheering and ideas-triggering'.

Alec is also a regular visitor to schools, where his high-energy poetry and storytelling also keeps him in touch with children and their reading. 'Even those "cool" students who were not keen to be seen reading were discussing your stories and poems' said one school librarian, while students' comments have ranged from 'He put smiles on our faces' to 'None could have done better!'

Alec has written articles on libraries, and on storytelling, and his work now takes him around the UK and abroad (he regularly works for British Council, and is a member of IFLA's Reading and Literacy Section). Like you, he wants to make sure that everyone's reading...

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Riveting Reads plus

Everyone's READING 11–18

EILEEN ARMSTRONG

introduction by
ALEC WILLIAMS

SLA
School Library Association

About the SLA

The School Library Association is an independent organisation and registered charity which was founded in 1937 to promote the development of libraries in schools. Today the SLA exists to support and encourage all those working in school libraries, raising awareness and promoting good practice through an effective training and publications programme. Membership of the Association brings many benefits including an advisory/information service for national and international enquiries, an excellent quarterly reviewing journal, website resources, and reduced rates for all publications and training courses.

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Everyone's Reading

This latest title in our Riveting Reads series has been specially commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), responsible for schools in England. It aims to provide information about titles which might attract and enthuse the whole range of pupils in secondary schools to read for pleasure, and is funded by the DCSF.

The booklist is available online at http://www.everyonesreading.org.uk as a searchable database and also as a downloadable pdf version.

The SLA is delighted to be involved with this project and hopes that it will support school librarians in the good work they are already doing and in particular in their quest to ensure that **Everyone's Reading**.

Acknowledgments

The author is as grateful as ever for the endless patience, good-humoured help and expert advice of Sally Duncan, Geoff Dubber, Alec Williams and Tricia Adams, for the beady eye of Jane Cooper and the technical wizardry of Richard Leveridge and Nigel Smith. Getting children and young people into books and keeping them there has got to be the best part of being a school librarian but because I'm not as young as I used to be special thanks should go to Graeme, Ben, Tom, Matthew, Jamie, Olivia, Emily, Nikita, Paige, Emma T, Emma C, Sophie and Sarah for their expert suggestions for this publication and to all the other Cramlington readers who over the years have challenged, enthused and inspired me by their passion (or otherwise!) for reading and their willingness to talk about what they read.

Happy reading!

The SLA is pleased to acknowledge the generous support of the Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF) in the production of this list, and particularly for the associated book gifting scheme for secondary schools.

We would also like to thank many of our partners for useful suggestions including ASCEL, Booktrust, CILIP School Libraries Group and Youth Libraries Group.

We are also very grateful to Peters Bookselling Services of Birmingham for their support and information, to our website specialists Intexta Web Services and of course to Eileen Armstrong, without whose wide knowledge of books this list would not have been possible.

Our thanks also to the following publishers for permission to use illustrations of their books on our cover:
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Contents

Introduction – by Alec Williams 7

What's in this booklist 25

Key to the list 25

Everyone's Reading

Boggle 26

Experiment 30

Explore 33

Fast Forward 38

Fear 42

Go Wild 47

Imagine 50

Indulge 53

Investigate 60

Laugh 65

Look Back 69

Play 74

Spy 79

Survive 84

Think 89

Train 96

Appendices

Read On... 100

Keeping them reading 101

Author index 103

Title index 105

Everyone's Reading!

Swim the whole length of this introduction – or dive in anywhere!

Whichever place you start at, don't forget to read the rest, afterwards...

If you have some ready money and want to order from the booklist straight away...

read Sections 2 and 3.

If you want some general ideas about promoting reading for pleasure...

read Sections 4 to 11.

If you want some specific ideas on reaching target groups...

read Sections 12 to 17 – but remember that these are less important than getting the overall 'reading culture' right!

If you want to know about evaluation, and further help...

read Sections 18 and 19.

1. Everyone's Reading?

Surely this is an over-optimistic title? 'If only they were!', you may be thinking. Well, this title was certainly chosen to catch your eye, but it's also meant in other ways:

- With the many 'target groups' and changing priorities we have, it may be timely to remember that the school library's mission *should* ultimately be to get *everyone* reading. It's easy to miss out categories of students in the rush to support 'this year's objective'.
- It's sometimes useful (and reassuring) to consider how much reading is actually going on out there – whether or not we see it in school libraries. In addition to magazines, comics, and newspapers, and reading on line, 2008's 'Read up Fed Up' survey (http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/wikireadia/index.php?title=Read_up_fed_up_research_findings) tells us that 11 to 14s are also reading blogs, song lyrics and film scripts, for example. Perhaps in one way or another, everyone *is* reading...though there's always room for more!
- This list contains material for most of the key audiences in secondary schools: boys; girls; both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4/5; 'reluctant' readers; 'struggling' readers; and those learning English as an additional language (EAL). In effect, it shows that there's reading material to suit all of us – not just 'your reading' and 'my reading', but 'everyone's reading!'

There are some great books in this list – ones which have a track record of appealing to the key audiences above. But books, like introductions, are only the beginning; it's vital to have books that appeal, but it's wrong to think: 'I've got the right books, so now they're bound to use the library more!' Encouraging more students to read is a complex business, and choosing the right books is only part of what it takes to make headway – a *reading culture* that is powered by the library, but runs through the whole school.

This introduction makes four assumptions:

1. That reading is a part of the overall achievement issue.
2. That reading is an area you want to address in your school – though remember that in many schools, students are reading well – and there are keen readers everywhere!
3. That reading by girls and boys is equally important, and so is supporting able and less able readers.
4. That the general approach should be a spread of initiatives, which include ones to hook non-readers, ones to help struggling readers, ones with boy appeal and girl appeal, ones to sustain good readers, and ones to keep students reading right through the school.

This introduction uses 'library' to cover whatever your space is called, 'librarian' to include a range of staff involved in this work, and 'school' to encompass whatever name your organisation uses. We hope you enjoy reading it, and that you'll encourage others in school to read it too. Use the booklist, and the introduction, to give a fresh impact to reading in your school, and keep in touch to tell us of your successes in getting *everyone reading*. Good luck!

2. What's in this book list?

This list contains around 260 titles for young people aged 11 to 18. They're arranged by catchy one or two-word themes, which highlight genres, or other categories. They are essentially up-to-the-minute titles, the very latest in some fiction series, one or two modern classics in new guises, and a few tried and tested favourites.

Its focus is fiction – though there are some non-fiction titles amongst the others. You could add to the list your own choice of other material to tempt students into reading, including items like puzzle books, magazines, comics, newspapers (including those for young people), DVDs, CDs and so on.

We hope you enjoy looking through the list, and finding the best titles to get everyone reading!

3. How should I use the list?

- Have a good look at your budget first to see how many you can afford to buy. There are some brilliant books here that will help to develop your stock and the enthusiasm of your users. Here is an opportunity to make a big impact.
- Get students involved in browsing the book list, and voting on the titles you could order. This will give them responsibility, make them feel valued, give them a sense of ownership of the books, and provide you with up-to-date information on student likes/dislikes.
- Use reading groups, and pupil librarians to input to this process, too. Bear in mind that, if they're avid readers, they may make 'book-lovers' choices'. Either stress the task of 'choosing for all the school', and get them talking to others, or add to their choices with evidence from other sources. What would non-users, and rare-users choose...?
- Once books you've ordered have arrived, make use of any reading groups (or a temporary focus group of students) in discussions on how to promote them.

- Read some of the books in this list that might be new to you. Children know when you're bluffing about books; it's important to gain their trust when creating readers, and keep up to date.
- Ask students to review the titles, and display the reviews both on paper and on your school's website. Why not ask your teaching and support staff colleagues to do this, too?
- Tell the local public library service which titles you're buying, so that they can check for extra copies, put displays in nearby libraries that your students use and improve your partnership working.
- Display the new titles in the library, but consider too how to keep that display going. Nothing looks sadder than an empty display, so have book information and colour images of the cover designs always present, publicise your request service, and promote the local public library service, which might have additional copies (see above).
- Send book boxes of the new titles, and 'follow-ons', around classes.
- Prepare some 'Liked this book? Then try these books!' guidance, for the books you choose; this could be in bookmark or poster form, or even in stickers at the back of the books. Make sure any other library staff, and pupil librarians, are briefed to offer such suggestions when asked, or when the books are returned.
- Make sure all teaching staff get a list of the new stock; there may be occasions when they can promote them, titles that they offer to read aloud for you, or occasions when fiction titles can assist other curriculum subjects.
- Arrange for news of the new books to be mentioned in assemblies, and tutor time.
- Check your stock for similar titles to display nearby, and/or order more.
- Check the websites listed in the list and this introduction, and add any to your own favourites. Make sure they're featured on the school website, and on library computers.
- The general aim should be to *cascade the books, and enthusiasm for them* to the rest of the school. Don't confine the buzz to just the library!

4. What's so good about reading?

Reading is fun. From the first experience of chanting nursery rhymes, laughing at strange-sounding words, and turning pages with an adult, reading offers a life-long pleasure. We owe it to children to help that pleasure last throughout their lives, and to sustain it during their teenage years is a special challenge.

Reading is unique. Where other media will deliver plot superbly well, books also allow you to get under the skin of the characters, and hear their thoughts. The 'slow build' of a gripping story is an experience that can last for hours or even days; although, in a busy world, it's more 'time-hungry' than a 90 minute movie, the experience will often live in the mind for far longer.

Reading makes you feel good. It enhances health and well-being. It can be relaxing and stress-busting. It can take you out of yourself and away from life's pressures. Unlike films and TV, the reader is always in control – *you* can choose how scary the characters should be!

Reading helps you make sense of yourself. It gives children different perspectives on life, and can help them understand themselves better. It's empowering, because through it they learn new things, gain

mental balance, dream dreams. It gives them a sense of cultural identity – it helps them to shape, store and reflect on their past and their future, testing problems and possible reactions to them vicariously. It helps them build decision-making skills, based on new information and perspectives.

Reading connects children to each other. It can help them see other points of view; it connects them to wider worlds and ideas. It gives them insights into other cultures, and other ways of thinking. It can build tolerance. Reading often brings children together when they share their reading – actually or virtually. It helps them understand and value the world's diversity, heritage and cultures.

'*We read to know that we are not alone'* — C. S. Lewis.

Reading is a creative act. Children use their own imaginations to bring the writer's text alive. Because reading fires the imagination it can inspire children to produce their own creative work.

Reading leads to learning. Reading continually informs, and allows learning for life. It helps children develop skills of literacy, interpretation and expression.

Though we think of our present decade as being a very 'visual world', with the emphasis on movies, on-line video, DVDs, and TV, young people are still surrounded by words, and they read more than perhaps we think. They may visit the school library to browse, without borrowing, or to borrow non-fiction, graphic novels, or joke books. Outside school, they may be reading magazines, newspapers, text messages, emails and websites on screen. They may be reading comics, CD sleeves, TV listings, takeaway menus… and much more. We may want them to discover the pleasure of reading fiction, and there are huge benefits for those who do, but it's important to value their own choices, and 'start where they are'.

It's equally important to provide the experience of story to those who may not be able to reach it themselves – reading stories aloud to struggling readers, for example, or using picture stories with students who have little English of their own.

Finally, it's important to rehearse 'reader-like behaviour'. The more opportunities there are for talking about books, sharing stories, reviewing or rating books, listening to adult role models, and so on, the more young people will come to believe that they can be – they *are* – readers too.

It should be obvious how many of the benefits of reading, listed above, feed into many other areas of achievement at school. The more we can encourage students to read for pleasure, the more it will help their overall progress. For some evidence on reading habits, and young people's views, look at:

- *Children's and Young People's Reading Habits* (National Literacy Trust, 2005), a survey carried out as part of the Reading Connects project
  http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Research/Reading_Connects_survey.pdf
- *Social Inclusion and Reading: an Exploration* (National Literacy Trust, 2006), a study based on the Reading Connects survey above.
  http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Research/SocInc.pdf
- *Young People's Self-Perception as Readers: An investigation including family, peer and school influences* (Clark, Osborne, Akerman; National Literacy Trust 2008)
  http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/Self-perception_as_readers_report_2008.pdf

Companion pieces to the full survey above have included...

- *Being a Reader: The Relationship with Gender*
  http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Research/Being%20a%20reader%20-%20gender%20web%202008.pdf

... and also:

- *How does Age relate to pupils' perceptions of themselves as Readers?*
  http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/Self_perception_age_2008.pdf
- *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) 2006 (Published November 2007)
  http://pirls.bc.edu/PDF/p06_international_report.pdf

...and the PIRLS report for England:

- *Readers and Reading: The National Report from England* (National Foundation for Educational Research) (Published on 28/11/07)
  http:// www.nfer.ac.uk/PIRLS
- *Teachers as Readers*
  http://www.ukla.org/downloads/TARwebreport.doc
- *Read up, Fed Up* (Summary only)
  http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/wikireadia/index.php?title=Read_up_fed_up_research_findings

For some even more important evidence, look at your own data. Do you fully exploit the information available from your library management system? Do you know the most-read titles by boys and by girls, individual students' reading patterns, and so on? Do you have a mechanism for recording book use in the library itself? Do you talk to all students (especially non-users), and their parents? When did you last do a survey of library use/non-use, and reading attitudes? Do you know who the keenest readers are, so you can recruit them as role models?

5. Raising the profile of reading

It is important to work throughout school, to raise the profile of reading, show how the library can be a powerhouse for this, and thereby maximise its use.

Here are some ideas:

- Find allies on the school staff, to work with. These could of course include English teaching staff, but may well include others with an interest in reading for pleasure, and the way in which it contributes across the whole curriculum.
- Set up regular meetings with the English Department, and with specialist literacy and EAL staff, focussing on reading for pleasure. This sort of structured approach can have more effect than brief conversations, and you can document progress.
- Use the work that you did for the National Year of Reading as a stimulus. Challenge senior staff to maintain impetus throughout the school for reading for pleasure, and sustain any initiatives you have started. The National Year of Reading highlighted the need for action, but projects need to be long term, on-going, and embedded in the whole school's priorities. Renew that stimulus with other book promotion events such as World Book Day, Children's Book Week, and so on.
- Plan a Reading Campaign in school, enlisting help from a team of colleagues, students, and others. Raise it at senior management level, and embed it in the school development plan. If there are other whole-school initiatives, on topics like EAL or boys' achievement, be a leading part of these too.

- With SATs recently discontinued at this level, there's scope for re-thinking what is done in this space. Has your library made a bid for activities?
- Send regular statistics to Senior Management about library usage – issue trends, attendance at events, numbers in the library at busy lunchtimes, and so on. Highlight areas of low take-up,
- Whenever you have a library-based (or library-sponsored) event, do a brief report on it, perhaps with photographs, and collect feedback quotes from students and staff. Do a 'quick-read' version too, for a school newsletter or website.
- If you're an SLA member, you'll get support from both the Association and from other members. Keep up the debate by using the 'Discussion Forum' in the Members' Area (http://www.sla.org.uk/members-area.php). Join at: http://www.sla.org.uk/membership.php
- Find local partners – the public library service, the school library service, nearby schools.

6. Right from the Start

Children's views of reading will have been heavily influenced before they reach secondary school. It may be that their primary school has had not enough books that appeal to them, and few if any role models. This is especially true of male role models – 48% of children have never been taught by a male teacher before secondary level.

Liaison with primary colleagues (e.g. transferring data about students' reading habits, and their views on reading; sharing a visit from an author, arranging for students to visit partner schools in the summer transition term) can strengthen links at transition, and prepare you both for building on pupils' strengths, and for catching any weaknesses early.

Amongst your other transition strategies, the public library's Summer Reading Challenge (http://www.readingagency.org.uk/children/summer-reading-challenge/, and in 2008 Team Read http://www.teamread.co.uk/) is a valuable way to keep students reading over the summer break. The 'challenge' aspect of the scheme, plus the accompanying stickers, badges and incentives, gives it particular boy appeal.

Make the most of the 'Booked Up' initiative (http://www.bookedup.org.uk/Home), with events to celebrate the choosing of books, and lots of follow-up about sequels, and 'other titles to try'.

7. Gender on the Agenda

Increasingly, we're seeing evidence that boys' and girls' brains work differently, and that they learn in different ways. Schools where boys thrive are those where hands-on learning is part of the agenda; where time at desks is punctuated by more physical activity; where there is regular feedback and guidance offered; where boys' improvement is praised, 'across the board' if possible, rather than within subjects; where there is chance to do out-of-school activities; where special attention is given to the learning styles that suit boys (for example, visual and kinaesthetic styles) – and where there is a bit of fun thrown in! If school librarians talk the same language as teachers, they will be part of this whole-school process, and the library will be embedded in any boys' achievement programme.

Girls are often more collaborative learners, and have stronger friendship groups. They may respond more to working in groups, and to learning that involves pooling ideas, and writing. They're also likely to respond well to discussions about books, and to exploring the way in which stories affect them, and link with their own experience.

It's not what's on the menu that matters though; it's also what's missing. Whilst both boys and girls will excel if 'boy-friendly' attributes are present, in their *absence*, boys will disengage and become disruptive much more often than girls, who evolve ways to cope with more passive learning.

Look at your library activities with these factors in mind. Which activities are most suited to boys, or to girls? Which activities give both genders and equal footing? For example:

- Most good ideas to get Key Stage 3 boys or girls reading are good ideas for all young people, and each is more likely to read if the whole school community are readers.
- You can gain much, in 'keeping the connections'. How about a list by boys of books they think girls would like, and vice versa? Keen readers like to compete, to see who reads most and tops the reader charts.
- Do work on 'how we choose books' (title, author's name, cover design, blurb, first paragraph, etc.). Boys often comment that they don't know what to choose, and this will strengthen their confidence. Carel Press's **Reading Game** (http://www.carelpress.co.uk/libraryskills.htm#reading) may help here, and there can be much useful discussion about 'What makes a boy book/girl book?'.

8. A Library Makeover?

Have a fresh look at your library area; more importantly, ask others how they see it.

Take the library out of the library:

Can people tell, *before* they get to the library, that yours is a school that values reading? This should happen right from the school reception area! Have plenty of evidence around school – posters, signs, photographs, or even small collections of stock in other locations (sports books in the gym, magazines in the dining room) – to connect with the library.

Designed for reading:

Is your library central within the school, and on traffic paths, so that it can be noticed? If not, is it clearly signposted from all areas of the school? Crucially, has it enough space? Has it got plenty of face-out display for books, dumpbins, and reading corners? Does it have floor cushions, easy chairs or sofas to aid browsing; listening posts for CDs and audio books? If your library needs a re-vamp, get some students in to advise – or to help with carrying out the makeover.

Atmosphere and Ambience:

Is your library welcoming? Does it say 'be yourself' or 'be careful'? Right from the start – the displays outside, signs on the door, and the first things they see as they enter – does it look like a comfortable place, one that intrigues, and one that's cool for children to be seen in? Does it have big posters of pupils or celebrities reading? Is it somewhere students can drop in, play board games, and meet friends? Do they feel a sense of ownership about your library? Is the library yours, the school's, or theirs? Students are more likely to use a facility that other students endorse, and are involved in.

On the shelf and on display – tempting readers:

Can students find genres that interest them, even in A-Z sequences? Is your library always changing, with 'author of the month', 'book of the day/week', mixing of fiction and non-fiction? Are signs exciting and eye-catching ('Dare you read these?' rather than 'Ghost Stories')? Get pupils to help you choose the genre names, to make them meaningful and catchy. Many students (especially boys) say they don't know what to choose, so make it easier, using lots of recommendations, displays, and bookshop techniques. Show pupils that you have a huge range of reading material, including fiction and non-fiction, comics and magazines, short stories, quick reads, poetry, jokes, graphic novels, picture books, and more.

Here are some more suggestions for giving your library a fresh start:

- Make some easy changes first. New signs, posters, photographs of children reading, and 'Watch This Space' posters to show the school that you're starting a new approach; put these around school, not just in the library. The National Literacy Trust has free posters for a quick face-lift (see, for example, the Reading Champions football stars **posters** at http://www.renaissance-learning.co.uk/nlt_posters/); there are some posters featuring 'urban' black role models at the **Star Reads** site (http://www.starreads.org/), and the SLA also does some great **posters** (http://www.sla.org.uk/nyr2008-posters.php, and http://www.sla.org.uk/isld-posters.php).
- Make sure you promote material for all these groups of readers with the same enthusiasm as any of your own personal 'likes'. Include promotion of material for your particular 'target groups' amongst talks to *all* students.
- Keep the library fresh, by regular changes. Like supermarkets, move sections of stock around temporarily to see where they're borrowed most. Market research shows that faced with no clear directions, most people in the UK turn left; perhaps this might mean that the A–K authors in your fiction sequence are borrowed more? Do you need to spotlight authors at the other end?
- Make a feature of your 'returned books' section. If it's a trolley, put it in a more prominent place, for students to see; it's a place they'd like to look in, for reading suggestions. You could even label the two sides 'Loved It!' and 'Hated It!', to see where readers choose to leave books they've read.
- If you regularly have small queues at your issue desk, have a display for students to see while they're waiting – like the sweets at a supermarket! It could be an area of stock you'd like to see used more ('Pick up a Poetry Book!', for example), a featured author, or some hints and tips to readers.
- Identify the most-used sections of the library (Where students meet each other? Where board games are played? Where the bean bags or easy chairs are?), and simply leave books around for them to pick up and glance at.
- Try bringing separated subjects together (joke and riddle books among a 'Funny Stories' section, for example, or love poems among a 'Romance Stories' section, if you have one).
- Are plays or poetry books hidden where they are? (Dewey puts them between 'Fishing' and 'Disasters'.) Move them to somewhere more prominent!

Finally, make sure that any library staff or helpers (both adults and pupils) are sensitive and tactful towards library users, and that all users – especially those venturing into the library for the first time – are genuinely welcomed.

9. Role Models for Reading

What all students need are role models for reading. Many of them lack these (especially male ones) even in their own families, and it's even more important that they experience such models at school. Jamie Oliver's recent boast that he 'got where he is without reading a book' has caused the National Literacy Trust to undertake a substantial piece of work on role models, which is due out at the time of writing.

Make the most of any role models you can, from school and the wider community – either in real life, on posters, on video, or through quotations of their words. Involve men, in particular, in library activities (the co-host of a reading group, for example), *and* encourage them to talk about reading throughout the school. Celebrities, well-liked teachers, older students, and peers all have a role to play.

Anyone too shy to talk, or too busy to visit the library can at least contribute information on what they're reading at the moment; a picture of themselves when a boy, with their favourite book then; anecdotes about what their parents caught them reading; their favourite place to read, and so on. The web lets you create an ideal showcase of who's reading what and why around the school. Try these ideas:

- Encourage other teachers to visit the library – a presence at lunch and break times (especially male) is particularly useful.
- Head Teachers can model the importance of reading at the highest level – can they regularly talk about reading, or share their book choices? Can they visit staff and student reading groups? They can also talk about reading at staff meetings, and invite others' book choices.
- Involve other men in the school – caretakers and administrators, for example.
- Make use of school governors, to talk about their reading, and what reading means to them.
- Invite family members (especially fathers and uncles) into school.
- If you have parent volunteers to help with reading, is there a fair balance of men and women involved? In the North of England and the Midlands, Reading Matters (http://www.readingmatters.org.uk/) can support this.
- When choosing authors, illustrators or storytellers to visit, feature both men and women; many will also provide a 'personal testimony' about how their poor reading at school turned into a love of books later in life.
- Poets and poetry rappers may be especially effective in reaching reluctant readers.
- Invite other kinds of guests (cartoonists, songwriters, sportsmen, DJs, graffiti artists).
- Don't forget community figures (local policemen, fire fighters, chefs, business leaders). Guests from outside the book world are valuable: a) because the visit happens in the library, and b) because you can pull out library materials to link in, and for follow-up.

10. Can't parents help?

Yes! They can reinforce what you're doing, attend events you plan, and Dads especially can model the fun of reading – even if it's simply through magazines and newspapers. It's important that any worry about their children doesn't show through, but with a light touch they can show interest in what they're reading, and help them realise that everyone's interested in reading for fun, not just school!

- Are parents given advice on how they can support young people's reading, or offered sessions on choosing and sharing books with them?
- Try 'Lads and Dads' projects – reading groups, reading challenges
- Invite parents to evening events – e.g. visits by sports stars and local celebrities
- Try a 'Dads into School' day. Romsey School in Hampshire invited Dads to join in a 'make your own computer' project – search the National Year of Reading website's 'WikiREADia', under 'Romsey', and look for other ideas while you're there!
- Use your school website or VLE – have reading lists for parents to use with their children, with reader comments. Love Reading 4 Schools (http://www.lovereading4schools.co.uk/) can help you create these, as well as getting money for more books for your school!

11. Using technology

For many students (including less able readers, and boys) technology can appeal more than reading – so don't set up a 'books versus technology' vibe – use them both together, and get technology to lead young people on to more reading. For example: books and magazines help students get the most out of computers, and websites about fiction can help lead students back to books. Remember also how much reading is being done from the screen, and the natural narrative quality of many computer games.

- Websites can include review sites, authors' own sites, word game sites, book festival sites, and a variety of games sites – some of which are book-related. *Vampirates* (http://www.vampirates.co.uk/) is only one established example.
- Get students involved in designing and maintaining the school library's own website. There are lots more ideas in the SLA's 'Fully Booked' guideline, Appendix H (see http://www.sla.org.uk/sla-guidelines.php).
- Use Inspiration mind mapping software: a) to recreate the ContinYou Reading Clubs' 'Flow chart' idea to recommend reads, and b) to create bookmap reviews.
- Programmes like Star Reader and Accelerated Reader can create quizzes based on your library stock.
- Boys in particular can enjoy being involved in the technical aspects of producing a school library newsletter – and in this way they can start to become contributors.
- Make 'public use' of your library management system data – publish regular 'Top Tens' for both boys and girls, for example, and announce chart positions at assemblies.

Don't forget other technologies, too, which appeal to most of this list's key audiences:

- Using mobile phones to do short text reviews, or send video reviews

- Using PDAs to read e-books, or swapping 'book bites'
- Using videoconferencing with other readers, across the region or across the world, through paired schools. The British Council's **Global Gateway** (http://www.globalgateway.org) is one approach to this.

There are many more tips on using technology in the SLA's 'Fully Booked' guideline; 25 great ideas in Appendix G alone! (see http://www.sla.org.uk/sla-guidelines.php for details)

12. Ideas to reach boys

- Identify 'peer leaders' and 'opinion formers' among boys. Any connections made here will be very powerful in reaching others, and you could find candidates for **Reading Champions** (http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/Champions/index.html).
- Identify any enthusiastic boy readers and use them as book promoters. 'Students are four times more likely to read something recommended to them by a peer than by a teacher' (MORI poll, 2003).
- Use committed older readers as 'reading buddies' for younger ones, or pair readers of a similar age.
- Use short-term reading challenges, with prizes and lots of feedback. Boys in particular like to know how they're doing, and have achievable goals.
- As well as making fast-paced action heroes easy to find, don't forget to show different kinds of masculinity in fiction – Tom Kelly's *The Thing with Finn*, and Alex Shearer's *Tins*, for example.
- Make connections between fiction and non-fiction. Not just curricular connections (the Holocaust and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, for example), but fun connections, and ones that link curricular subjects to leisure reading – the science behind science fiction, for example.
- Schemes like **Readathon** (http://www.readathon.org/) can appeal to students' sense of challenge – the badges and stickers help too, as does the money-raising dimension.
- Recruit students as pupil librarians. Boys in particular respond well to being given responsibilities, and it can help all students' self-esteem. The SLA has a great new toolkit for Pupil Librarians, with all the work (certificates, letters to parents, interview questions) done for you. Available to SLA members, you can download it at: http://www.sla.org.uk/pupil-toolkit.php
- Some boys (like the present author!) are keen to show off their speaking skills. If you have a debating group, what about a book-related debate? What about using boys to read funny poems aloud? They could do this on to CD, complete with different voices and sound effects, or make a podcast reading their favourite extracts from books for the school website, for other pupils to listen to or download. A great opportunity to work with your drama department!
- Inter-class (or inter-house) book events – quizzes, for example – can help boys gain prestige by representing their team.
- Use the library as an event venue - Games Workshops (Lord of the Rings-based 'Warhammer' gaming clubs), chess tournaments, talks, quizzes.
- The **Kids' Lit Quiz** (http://www.kidslitquiz.com/) can motivate boys particularly, appealing to their competitive instincts.

- Get boys involved in book awards – either shadowing national ones, like Carnegie and Kate Greenaway, or judging for one of the growing number of lively local ones. Regional book awards give an opportunity to meet up with reading boys from nearby schools, and other reading groups.
- Reading Groups can be mixed gender (useful for boys to share their reading tastes with girls, and vice versa), or 'boy only'. They could be themed (Harry Potter Fan Club, Graphic Novel or Manga Group), or they could feature a boy-friendly genre like sports stories or science fiction
- Reading Group activities that attract boys include reading plays together, introducing non-fiction books about a hobby or interest, and researching author details on websites
- Many schools report that once boys find success and enjoyment in club type activities, this spills over into academic life too.

13. Ideas to reach girls

- Improve signposting of girls' fiction in the library, maybe using a free bay, or the end panel of an island bookcase to show some authors to try (have these on bookmarks, too). This approach may avoid the need for a full-scale 'girls' section', which has drawbacks, such as polarising reading tastes, and reducing any 'middle ground', that both sexes could share.
- Include girl-friendly fiction, or 'pink lit', in the material you read aloud (Animal stories, fantasies, stories about real life, stories about families, perhaps with an element of romance, for example).
- Remember girls in the websites you highlight – authors' sites which have 'girl appeal', fan fiction sites, and soap sites, for example.
- Feature, in your boy-friendly titles, those in which girls play a more balanced part (compare Robert Muchamore, Charlie Higson, Joe Craig and Anthony Horowitz, for example).
- Identify those authors or titles which may be read equally by boys and girls (Alex Shearer's *Tins*, or Pete Johnson's *Bad Spy's Guide*, for example. Joe Craig claims his readership is 50:50 girls and boys).
- To balance the more 'girly' fiction, consider titles which question female stereotypes – e.g. Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*, *Pretties* and others, or Sara Lawrence's *High Jinx.*
- Look also for stories with feisty female leading characters – Carol Hedges' *Spy Girl*, for example, Lyra in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* – and maybe including some of the 'alternative folk tales'.
- Manga can appeal to girls. (shōjo or shoujo manga [as opposed to shōnen manga], is the term for manga titles specifically aimed at girls from around 10–18.) Also titles based on anime characters, such as *Inuyasha*. Why not start a manga club, to see if it attracts the girls?
- Books with TV or film tie-ins – currently, for example, books and graphic novels from the *Heroes* TV series, and from the *Twilight* film.
- The diary form of story (e.g. Jean Ure's *Boys Beware*, and Jacqueline Wilson titles) can succeed especially well with girls – perhaps echoing their own blogging and social networking styles of writing.
- Consider visits by female authors. Well-known authors include: Cathy Cassidy, Cathy Hopkins, Chris Higgins, Jacqueline Wilson, Jean Ure, Yvonne Coppard, and Louise Rennison – and there may be good speakers from authors nearer to your school.

- How about a scheme to recognise reading role models among girls? Girls can now be **Reading Champions** (http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/Champions/index.html), or you may have a 'Reading Angels' scheme.
- The more sociable aspects of reading are often prominent with girls – book talking, peer recommendations, 'book dating', using bulletin boards, and the VLE chat function.
- Dramatising parts of books, and texted reviews can work better with girls.

14. Ideas for reluctant readers

- Start from where readers are, not where you would like them to be. Once you've shown your interest in their present reading choices, they'll be much more willing to accept recommendations, either from you or from fellow students.
- Many young people are 'grazers, rather than diners' in their reading, and many, lacking reading stamina, will 'dip into' books. Start with short stories, poetry, jokes and riddles, urban legends, and other bite-sized reads, then build up.
- Talk to students; if you are genuine about your need to know their reading tastes, they'll respond to this – though allow for them sometimes telling you what you want to hear! Floor walking in the library, personal interaction, observation, surveys, suggestion boxes, requests, online polls on the school/library website, etc. – all can tell us what students want from their library.
- Tempt students with lots of high-profile TV and film tie-ins. In recent years, we've had more and more notice of coming movies based on children's books, so why not start a 'Read it First!' campaign, before the movie's release? Alternatively, replace paperbacks, when you can, with those bearing the film or TV cover – they'll jump off the shelves!
- Make connections between reading and other things they do in their lives – gaming and sports, for example – with non-fiction, fiction and magazines.
- Fun furniture such as large beanbags, and funky sofas can encourage library visitors to stay – and you can leave inviting books nearby.
- There's no substitute for 'waving and raving' – enthusing about books by librarians, teachers, and other students. Read a dramatic opening, or an exciting episode early in the book, to invite students to finish the book. 'Personal interaction, book waving and raving, is more important than any number of reviews or computer listings' (From *Young People's Reading at the End of the Century*).
- Book boxes for tutor time is an area where you can spotlight tempting reads, tailored to students you may know personally.
- Put 'Book bite' posters around school, to lure readers into the library.
- Humour (Michael Lawrence, The Two Steves, Andy Stanton, Eoin Colfer) is a strong draw.
- Involve a range of students, including reluctant readers, in exercises like involvement in book selection.
- Work with graphic novels, comics, manga, and picture books for older readers.

- And always remember Paul Jennings's remark: 'There is no such thing as a reluctant reader; a reluctant reader is simply someone for whom an adult has not yet found a good enough book'. Expand 'adult' to 'another reader', and you include powerful peer recommendations, too.

15. Ideas for struggling readers

- The books in this list don't have to be read independently. Many titles in this list lend themselves to reading aloud and sharing, so that struggling readers still have the experience of stories. Although 70% of primary teachers in the *Teachers as Readers* study (http://www.ukla.org/downloads/TARwebreport.doc) said that they had read aloud to children during the last month, does this happen enough at secondary level?
- Be careful to distinguish between so-called 'reluctant readers' and those with genuine reading difficulties. Students may not use your library for both reasons, and although the situations sometimes overlap (and some materials may be useful for both) it's important to identify individual circumstances.
- Poetry is a good way to give readers confidence. Short, lighter poems can be quick to read and memorise, and many students enjoy reciting.
- Look at Dyslexia Action's criteria for 'dyslexia-friendly books'. Many of these qualities are useful for struggling readers in general, for instance:
  - The story is of interest to the reader and relevant to his/her age
  - Short sentences and paragraphs, which help to maintain interest and encourage a feeling of progress
  - Wide margins and plenty of white space, to encourage good reading flow and pace
  - Right margins unjustified, making it easier to distinguish between those lines read and those yet to be read
  - Books that have pictures or headings and other signpostings where appropriate as this helps navigation, and to break up text into manageable chunks
  - Books that are printed in a clear font that is kerned so that the letters are easily distinguishable, and in a print size of 11pt
  - Books that are well-structured and easy to follow.
- Involve struggling readers in book-related activities where reading is not as critical – helping make short radio programmes about reading, to podcast in and beyond school, compiling PowerPoint presentations about the library, or providing illustrations for displays.
- Encourage poorer readers to be involved in using video cameras (filming dramatised versions of books, readers talking about books, author visits, adverts for the library, etc.), and using still digital cameras to photograph 'readers with their favourite books'.
- Remember to include everyone's reading choices at assemblies or tutor time, including the shorter or simpler choices of some readers. These could be anonymous, if students feel embarrassed, but should still be there, to make others realise the range of reading.

- Involve SEN students as 'Book Consultants' in the scheme run by **Barrington Stoke** (http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk), which uses students to test new manuscripts, and offers books and incentives. (See Barrington Stoke's new 'Solo' and 'Go' series, too.)
- Don't forget storytelling, either by guests or school staff. Traditional tales often address powerful issues that contemporary fiction would shy away from, and there are some great ghost stories which will appeal to the horror story fans.
- Start a Storytelling Club – they can often appeal to less able readers, and give them confidence. Jane Hislam's 'Storytelling Clubs in Schools', published by the **Society for Storytelling** (http://www.sfs.org.uk) has ideas, and recent SLN posts have described personal experiences of this.

16. Ideas for EAL students

- Use titles from authors who are internationally known (e.g. Rowling, Dahl), which students may be familiar with from their home countries. There may be easier versions (e.g. 'the book of the film') that can be used at first.
- Liaise with specialist teachers, who may be working with EAL students on a one-to-one basis.
- Use 'bite-sized' reads such as Rising Stars' *Downloads* series, Barrington Stoke titles, and Ransom Publishing's *Boffin Boy* series.
- Make use of adult series such as the NIACE 'Quick Reads'.
- Encourage, and take part in **European Day of Languages** (http://www.ecml.at/edl/), on 26 September each year. Students wear multi-language 'Talk to Me' stickers, to encourage conversations in their language – or another language they understand.
- Consider titles originally published in the home countries of EAL students (e.g. Cornelia Funke and Christine Nöstlinger, for Germany).
- Remember folk tales from EAL students' countries of origin (e.g. Orchard's *Magical Tales from around the World* series). The same publisher's *Once upon a World* series pairs familiar folk stories with variants elsewhere, to show similarities.
- The plots of Shakespeare plays, and of Greek myths, (both in simplified versions) are also widely known, and might provide common ground.
- Seek translated titles. **Winged Chariot** (http://www.wingedchariot.com/) is one example here.
- Check your stock for stories about the immigrant experience. (Picture books such as Amy Hest's *When Jessie came across the Sea*, Allen Say's *Grandfather's Journey;* novels such as Imran Ahmad's *Unimagined,* Berlie Doherty's *Abela*, Beverley Naidoo's *Making it Home,* and Benjamin Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy*; anthologies such as the Arts Council's *From There to Here*.)
- Concentrate on early intervention. EAL students entering school at Year 7 need immediate help; they may be much more confident English users by Years 9 or 10.
- Include in your range of library activities those which place EAL students on a more even footing – e.g. use a team approach to any quizzes, etc., where they can contribute without being singled out.

- Also include library and reading activities that actively *favour* EAL students – e.g. quiz questions on their home countries, or international subjects like 'food around the world'.
- Since many EAL students may know some English through English Language movies, and English language song lyrics, make use of both these in your library, and in activities.
- Contribute to special events, such as a 'Week of History and Culture' in school, focussing on different countries, and including products, food, etc. Such an event could specifically feature the countries of EAL families.
- Make use of non-fiction books and series, such as 'Moving to Britain from...', and 'New EU Countries and Citizens' series (both published by Watts).
- Poetry can be useful – the structure, along with rhyme, rhythm and repetition, helps in learning English
- Picture books – particularly those with busy pictures – can provide lots to describe, and thus a lot of language use

17. Ideas for Key Stage 4/5

- Make sure reading is visible across the whole school – pictures, posters, displays, books in tutor groups, etc., all of which include older students.
- Organise parallel activities for KS4/5 students, if they're excluded from younger ones – e.g. a special 'pub style' quiz for Year 9 to Year 11s who are too old for the Kids' Lit Quiz.
- Use the power of TV tie-ins; e.g. Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series which is currently being filmed.
- Use photographs of staff, and older students, with their favourite books – or with their 'quick quotes' about what reading means to them.
- Get staff and students to send postcards about what they've been reading during summer (this works well at the Year 7 transition stage, too).
- As with other ages, screen reads are a powerful draw for older students.
- Do you have any special sections of older fiction? ('Fiction Plus', or 'Fiction Extras' are possible titles)? Check your library's signposting – can students easily find these?
- Does your library direct students to suitable adult titles well enough? Does it genuinely make links between similar genres in both age ranges? Try a 'Liked this? Try this!' promotion which moves from children's to adult fiction. These ideas are an alternative to a complete 'Key Stage 4 area' in the library, which can have drawbacks, and creates more places in which to look for a particular author or series.
- Many teachers are simply unaware of good young adult titles, that they could then recommend. Give them a list of the best, and encourage them to sample a few.
- Focus on peer recommendations. With this age group, success is even more 'word of mouth' than in Key Stage 3.
- Have displays of 'Staff Picks', to reinforce the notion of adults reading for pleasure.

- Use fun activities to encourage students to recommend books to each other: 'Blind Date', 'Speed Dating', and so on.
- Remember biographies and memoirs (e.g. *A Child Called It*).
- Use Sixth Formers' (sometimes!) superior book knowledge and reading experience to enthuse younger students – as coaches for the Kids Lit Quiz, for example; as Reading Champions, Book Pushers, Book Doctors/Book Selectors.
- Try 'Richard and Judy' style reading campaigns/awards using Head Boy and Head Girl, for Sixth Formers (you can re-title the awards with the student names involved!).
- It's important to get staff even more involved at this level, to up the discussion and change the atmosphere; Joint Staff/Sixth Form reading groups, for example.

Finally... the real secret to success in Key Stage 4 and 5 lies in the work you do in Key Stage 3!

18. How do I know if I've succeeded?

Encouraging more students to read (and students to read more) should be a long-term campaign. Have clear aims at the outset, decide which activities you'll try in the first year, the second year, and so on; build in milestones and celebrations and keep collecting evidence.

As elsewhere, evidence can be *quantitative* – number of students in the library; borrowing data from library management system; and remember to keep event attendance figures by gender – or *qualitative*, covering improvements in pupils' curriculum work; improvements *you* have noted, in confidence, writing reviews, behaviour, etc.; and anecdotes from students themselves. There are many more aspects you can measure (increased motivation, for example), and ways of measuring (observation, survey, interviews, polls).

Remember that 'a picture is worth a thousand words', so photograph all you do, circulate these, and add them to reports. Quirky photographs of students reading in the library bring home the impact you're having, as do the 'extreme reading' photographs you can invite others to take.

19. Where else can I get help?

- The School Library Association (http://www.sla.org.uk/) provides advice, training, conferences, and local branch support. It has an extensive publications list:
  - Riveting Reads (http://www.sla.org.uk/riveting-reads.php), is a series of themed booklists such as those for 8-12s and 12-16s
  - Guidelines (http://www.sla.org.uk/sla-guidelines.php) is a series of practical guides such as

    Fully Booked: Reader Development and the Secondary School LRC

    and

    Brilliant Books: Running a Successful School Library Book Event

    amongst a whole range of other titles.

- The National Literacy Trust (http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/index.html) has several important initiatives to help boys' reading:
  - Reading Champions (http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/Champions/index.html) celebrates the motivational power of reading role models, especially male; champions can be boys or girls, teachers, librarians, parents or others, and there's a series of certificates and awards. There's a reading champions toolkit, and some 'Reading Champions Dads' ideas.
  - Reading the Game (http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Football/index.html) works with football clubs to promote reading, with lots of football-themed ideas.
  - Reading Connects (http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/readingconnects/index.html) supports schools in building a whole-school reading culture; it has an extensive website, with case studies, downloadable resources, research, and practical ideas.
- NASEN (http://www.nasen.org.uk/Index.asp) has information of interest to special needs teaching, and in association with Risings Stars publishers, produces series such as the 'Downloads', for struggling readers.
- The School Libraries Group SLG (http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/school/) is part of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, or CILIP (http://www.cilip.org.uk) supports CILIP members in school libraries, through conferences, regional training courses, publications, and a journal, *School Libraries in View*.
- CILIP's Education Libraries Group ELG (http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/education/), which includes schools and colleges, may also be of interest; it takes a wider view of the whole education process.
- CILIP's Youth Libraries Group YLG (http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/youth/), supporting CILIP members working in public library children's services, and school library services. Both its regional meetings and its conferences will have topics to interest librarians in schools.
- Local Library Services (both public libraries and schools library services, where available) can either be traced through local authority websites and telephone directories, or approached directly through your nearest branch library. See the SLA's list of UK Schools Library Service websites http://www.sla.org.uk/links.php?i=26.
- Other colleagues, through school library service-based support groups, the School Library Association's network of national and regional branches, or CILIP's SLG and YLG branches.

What's in this booklist?

This list contains around 260 titles young people from 11 to 18 will enjoy, most are completely different to the *Boys into Books* titles. They're arranged by catchy one or two-word themes, which highlight genres and offer lots of display and promotional possibilities. There are plenty of up-to-the-minute titles, the very latest in some fiction series, several modern classics in new guises, and a few tried and tested favourites. The list specifically contains material both for boys and for girls; material for reluctant and struggling readers; material for students learning English as an additional language (EAL), and some titles to interest older students. The list can do little more than highlight the offerings available to these groups of readers. Do use the list as a springboard to the publishers' wider and ever increasing collections.

The main focus here is fiction – though non-fiction titles can be found amongst the list. You could add to the list your own choice of other material to tempt students into reading for pleasure, including things like puzzle books, magazines, comics, newspapers (including those for young people), DVDs, CDs and so on.

We hope you enjoy looking through the list, and finding the very best titles to get everyone reading!

Key to the list

Most books are paperbacks. The following selection guides are included:

KS3 indicates suitability for 11–13s (KS3 in England and Wales)

KS4 KS4 indicates suitability for 13–14+ (KS4 in England and Wales)

AA indicates suitability for those with reading difficulties

indicates mature content

indicates audio version available.

Sadly with lists like these not everything can be included and some favourites have inevitably had to be left out. For every title included many more could have featured. Titles due for publication in 2009 also had to be excluded at the time of compilation.

The main attraction of such lists is of course that they are guaranteed to open up hours of passionate debate with other librarians, teachers and of course the students themselves in your school. Do let us know your own personal favourites in the SLA discussion forum.

Happy reading!

BOGGLE

PHILIP ARDAGH

Philip Ardagh's Book of Absolutely Useless Lists

Macmillan, 9780330434171

A brilliantly pick-upable book of lists, one for every day of the year, featuring all the things your brain never knew you needed to know; smelliest cheeses, animals which look like something else, items most commonly lost in launderettes, possessors of notable moustaches and much much more.

RUSSELL ASH

The Top 10 of Everything 2009

Hamlyn, 9780600617396

The trivia buff's ultimate book of lists on everything imaginable, compiled by category, well-illustrated and with full colour photos. Where the *Guinness Book of Records* presents only one of something, this book offers a list of the 10 best, worst, biggest, weirdest… plenty here to pore over, memorise and amaze your friends with. Now featuring 'Then and Now' lists to prove how times change.

http://www.top10ofeverything.com/

RUSSELL ASH

Whitaker's World of Facts 2009

A & C Black, 9781408105863

A must-have for all fans of facts and figures, containing fact files, world records, lists and photographs on every subject imaginable. As entertaining as it is 'well I never knew that!' informative.

BILL BRYSON

A Really Short History of Nearly Everything KS4

Doubleday, 9780385614801

A mindboggling but very visual and highly accessible popular science book offering answers to all the questions you've ever wanted to ask, and some you've never even thought of, about the planet we live on. Bryson manages to cut through the controversy surrounding vast topics like evolution and the origins of the universe, making science fascinating and fun.

http://www.randomhouse.com/features/billbryson/

GUINNESS

Guinness World Records 2009

Guinness, 9781904994367

Containing over 1,500 new and updated records and contemporary categories such as highest computer games scores and most downloaded podcast, this is still the ultimate trivia guide and works hard to stay ahead of the rest. With 100% new photographs, illustrative fold-outs, interactive spreads of records you can try yourself at home and new 3D graphics, this is definitely one all kids want to keep reading. No library, home, school or classroom can ever have enough copies.

http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/

RICHARD HORNE

101 Things You Wish You'd Invented and Some You Wish No One Had KS3

Bloomsbury, 9780747591986

From inventions which changed the world like glass and the compass to the everyday ones we take for granted like pencils and underpants, this is a small format, big ideas book to dip in and out of and find something new every time.

JEREMY LESLIE

Pick Me Up Put Me Down

Dorling Kindersley, 9781405332682

This highly visual, eye-catching encyclopedia for the internet generation answers all the questions you ever wanted to ask and the ones you haven't even thought of yet. Whether you pick a page, browse a category, follow a cross-reference or use the index this is exciting and addictive information finding.

JOHN LLOYD

The Book of General Ignorance KS4

Faber, 9780571246922

This compendium of curious trivia based on the TV series is a cut-above; genuinely engrossing, it not only sets out the fascinating facts but explains why they are true, putting right frequently held misconceptions in the most memorable ways. You can't help but be pulled in by the passion of the compilers for their material.

NICOLA MORGAN

Know Your Brain

Walker Books, 9781406304152

A fabulous and frequently funny book about your amazing brain, packed full of top tips for how to make it work better for you. Learn more about how your brain works, your preferred learning style and how to keep your brain fit and healthy. Featuring fun tests and quizzes and even a delicious recipe for brain cake, this is the kind of book to revolutionise your life.

http://www.nicolamorgan.co.uk/

GLENN MURPHY

How Loud Can You Burp? KS3

Macmillan, 9780330454094

Even more answers to extremely important questions asked by visitors to the Science Museum, following on from the success of *Why Is Snot Green*? This is a fun and refreshing look at the world we live in, revealing what is wetter than water, the differences between brains and computers, the deadliest diseases and much more besides.

MICK O'HARE

Do Polar Bears Get Lonely? KS4

Profile Books, 9781846681301

This quirky little book contains the answers to some of life's most baffling questions. Taken from the Last Word column in *New Scientist* magazine, it is the third book in the series to offer a range of reader responses to some very tricky questions; everything from how they get the stripes in toothpaste to whether spiders ever get thirsty. Entertaining and informative.

http://www.newscientist.com

JAN PAYNE and MIKE PHILLIPS

The World's Best Book

Buster Books, 9781906082291

Only the very best facts made it into this, *The World's Best Book*; stuffed full of the biggest and bravest, brainiest and brightest, the smelliest and shiniest and scariest… Perfect for fact-philes everywhere and with absolutely no boring bits allowed.

RICHARD PORTER

The Big Book of Top Gear

BBC Books, 9781846074639

A behind-the-scenes look at the personalities, the challenges, the cars, the stunts and The Stig from the popular TV series. Cleverly thought-out and exceptionally well-produced this is 'just like *Top Gear* on the telly… except it's a book'. At long last the BBC has recognised the attraction of its *Top Gear* brand beyond the TV series and has now launched a whole series of books which can't fail to turn boys on to reading. You'll need to buy them all!

ROBERT LE ROY RIPLEY

Ripley's Believe It Or Not 2009

Random House, 9781847945129

An all-new, mind-boggling collection of the weirdest, wackiest and most wonderful individuals on the planet all with bizarre habits and hobbies. Superbly documented in full colour photographs, captions and snappy text box descriptions this is cool and quirky reading, easy to pick up, impossible to put down and which quickly acquires a huge fan base.

http://www.ripleys.com/

MITCHELL SYMONS

How Much Poo Does an Elephant Do? KS3

Doubleday, 9780385613651

A handy compendium of fascinating facts and totally useless trivia following on from *How to Avoid A Wombat's Bum*, randomly arranged in categories covering everything from the colour-blindness of squirrels to Walt Disney's fear of mice to the daily bug-eating habits of the average human. Simply written and made even more accessible with a huge variety of comic line drawings throughout, brains love hoovering up details like these.

VARIOUS

Do Not Open

Dorling Kindersley, 9781405322072

An irresistible and visually exciting encyclopedia of the world's best kept secrets, unsolved mysteries and most controversial theories. Find out the truth about crop circles, the Bermuda Triangle, the Golden Ratio, Fibonacci numbers and Jack the Ripper by navigating your own path through the pages and cross references. Easy to dip in and out of at leisure but informative enough to learn something from too.

VARIOUS

Wow!

Dorling Kindersley, 9781405322485

Described as the 'ultimate reference experience' DK take conventional encyclopedic categories but present the essential information in a series of unusual photographic galleries all explained in just the right amount of detail to engage and inform. Thoroughly-researched, mind-expanding and bursting with 'wow' factor.

WE ARE WHAT WE DO

Teach Your Granny to Text & Other Ways to Change the World

Walker Books, 9781406320718

This sequel to *Change the World for a Fiver* sets out 30 easy actions thought up by children themselves which are fun for everyone to do, will make the world a better place and bring about big change. Empowering reading and a great discussion-starter.

http://www.wearewhatwedo.org/

EXPERIMENT

JOHN AGARD and SATOSHI KITAMURA

The Young Inferno

Frances Lincoln, 9781845077693

A completely contemporary update to an old classic, Dante's *Inferno* by an author/illustrator marriage made in heaven. Agard's wickedly witty retelling is set off to stunning effect by Kitamura's stylish and stylized, high energy illustrations in graphic novel format with plenty of detail to pore over.

Follow Kitamura's hoodie-sporting protagonist through the nine circles of hell. It will be one of the most original reading journeys you'll ever take.

DAVID ALMOND and DAVE McKEAN

The Savage

Walker, 9781406308150

Blue finds comfort after the death of his father in writing a far-fetched tale about a wild child who lives deep in the woods near his home, feasting on berries and anyone unlucky enough to catch sight of him. Writing people he knows into his tale proves to be Blue's undoing, for suddenly fact and fiction become confused and the savage pays a visit to the local bully. McKean's wild and raw illustrations bring Blue's grief and turmoil alive for the reader. Matched with Almond's magical and masterly storytelling, this is a sophisticated picture book about sadness and hope which is simply unmissable.

http://www.davidalmond.com

ADAM BLADE

The Dark Realm: Skor the Winged Stallion (Beast Quest) KS3

Orchard, 9781846169984

In the kingdom of Gorgonia, the good beasts have been taken prisoner at the command of the Dark Wizard. Although Tom and his friends are desperate to free them, he has to journey through the Dark Realm and defeat Skor the winged Stallion. Highly collectable, vividly described, boy-friendly fantasy with accompanying game cards and a brilliantly beastly website.

http://www.beastquest.co.uk

HELEN CRESSWELL (ed)

Mystifying: Sinister Stories of the Unexplained

Kingfisher, 9780753416327

A pulse-quickening, spine-tingling collection of short stories each one more eerie than the last, perfectly picked for maximum fear factor from a range of master storytellers both classic and contemporary: Paul Jennings, Joan Aiken and Carl Jung, Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, Ray Bradbury, Emily Brontë and many many more.

TERRY DEARY

Shadow of the Gallows (Horrible Histories Gory Stories) KS3

Scholastic, 9781407103662

Bairn escapes his miserable life as an Edinburgh chimney sweep. His new job in London proves to be far more dangerous when he is caught up in a plot to kill Queen Victoria herself, punishable by hanging from the gallows. One of an irresistibly gruesome and gory, easy read adventure series to really bring history to life.

GARDNER DOZOIS and JACK DANN (eds)

Dark Alchemy

Bloomsbury, 9780747589549

A spellbinding selection of fantasy stories from a star-studded list of top name authors including Eoin Colfer and Orson Scott Card, Garth Nix and Neil Gaiman, Tanith Lee and many more. All explore the hold witches and wizards both good and evil have on our imagination and will haunt and bewitch even non-fantasy readers.

SHANNON HALE, DEAN HALE and NATHAN HALE

Rapunzel's Revenge

Bloomsbury, 9780747587439

Escaping from her seemingly interminable imprisonment at the hands of Gothel, smart and sassy Rapunzel is driven by revenge and sets off across the Wild West landscape of the Badlands to find Gothel's Villa. Enemies await her at every turn and before long she's in lots of trouble for stealing, kidnapping and misusing her hair… An original and entertaining graphic novel twist on the original fairytale with striking filmic illustrations.

SOPHIE HANNAH and JOHN HEGLEY (eds)

The Ropes: Poems To Hold On To

Diamond Twig, 9780953919673

A dynamic collection of poems about life, addressing teenage concerns, split into poems by women and (from the other end) poems by men. All the contributors include personal notes and thoughts on being a teenager and each poem comes with a reflect/respond feature. This cleverly conceived design, personal approach, thoughtful selection of poets and pop lyricists and inspired introductions by Hegley and Hannah make this so much more than a poetry book for teenagers. It will be picked up time and time again.

LUCY HAWKING and STEPHEN HAWKING

George's Secret Key to the Universe

Corgi, 9780552559584

Making friends with his scientist neighbour and his daughter after his pet pig escapes into their garden turns out to be the most exciting thing which has ever happened to George. Together with scientist Eric's extra-intelligent computer, Cosmos, they undertake a thrilling rollercoaster ride through the solar system, across asteroid storms, to the very edge of the black holes, uncovering many complex mysteries of the universe along the way. A fabulous mixture of fact, fun and fiction studded with illustrations to make science make sense.

JOHN HEGLEY

My Dog is a Carrot

Walker, 9781406312089

Completely quirky and original, Hegley takes all manner of ordinary, random subjects and transforms them into something altogether funnier and more meaningful; from dogs to cornflakes, leeks, cups of tea, and even a library. Guaranteed to convert even the most committed poetryphobe and perfect for performing or reading aloud. You'll never look at the world in the same way again.

HILARY KOLL and STEVE MILLS

Counting on Leroy (fyi) KS3 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842994726

It's just as well Leroy is mad about maths because when he appears on a TV quiz by accident his random maths facts will have to save the day. A brilliantly inspired and unusual addition to the excellent *fyi* series which mixes fiction with facts for 10-14s, reading age 8. Maths has never been so interesting or meaningful!

MARGO LANAGAN

Red Spikes KS4

David Fickling Books, 9780385613224

Ten dark, disturbing, dazzling stories guaranteed to unsettle your sleep. These twisted fairytales tackle love and life, fear and grief and every emotion in between. To say more would spoil the stories themselves. Just expect the unexpected with lots of delicious loose ends to leave you wondering long into the night.

BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

Talking Turkeys

Puffin, 9780140363302

The perfect medicine for poetryphobes. Zephaniah's high-energy rap style poems leap across the pages, his brain bouncing between issues he cares passionately about; politics, racism, animal cruelty and the environment as well as all-important human emotions. This is a well illustrated and varied collection of cool verse which crackles with fun and excitement but also subtly engenders respect for others and for all living things.

EXPLORE

THE BEASTLY BOYS

Werewolf versus Dragon (An Awfully Beastly Business) KS3

Simon & Schuster, 9781847382863

Ulf the orphaned werewolf lives at a centre for endangered and rare animals, also the base for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Beasts. In this first adventure Ulf is out to protect the dragons from a plot to bring back the sport of dragon fighting and bring down the world's most deadly beast hunter. With a colourful cast of supporting characters including Tiana the fairy, Orson the giant and the resident vet, this is a magical fantasy adventure for younger readers.

HOLLY BLACK AND TONY DITERLIZZI

A Giant Problem (Beyond the Spiderwick Chronicles) KS3 ▸▸

Simon & Schuster, 9781847382641

The Nixie's Song continues here with the fire-breathing giants beginning to wake up down in the Florida swamps. Lucky then that Nick and Laurie, the giant-slaying team are on hand, though they hadn't reckoned on quite this many giants. Dazzling illustrations pull you deeper into the brilliantly inventive fantasy world beyond the Spiderwicks.

http://www.spiderwick.com

http://www.diterlizzi.com

PSEUDONYMOUS BOSCH

The Name of this Book is Secret KS3

Usborne, 9780746090923

Cass and Max-Ernest set out to discover the truth about the mysterious Symphony of Smells but in fact end up investigating a sinister experiment involving kidnapped children and the secret of eternal youth and attempting the rescue of a classmate from an unimaginably terrible fate. A brilliant accompanying website provides more information for readers – if they can crack the clever codes!

http://www.thenameofthisbookissecret.co.uk

http://www.pseudonymousbosch.com

TRUDI CANAVAN

The High Lord (Black Magician Trilogy) KS4

Atom, 9781905654093

Adopted by the Magician's Guild, street girl Sonea, has been learning magic from the High Lord himself, Akkarin. With their realm under threat of invasion from a dangerous ancient enemy Sonea has many important decisions to make in an exciting conclusion to this high fantasy trilogy.

http://www.trudicanavan.com/

SILVANA DE MARI

The Last Elf KS3

Bloomsbury, 9780747577881

A refreshingly different story about Yorsh, the last elf left in the world, who sets off on a significant and magical adventure with a dog and its two human owners encountering all manner of prophecies, storms, disasters and dragons.

CHARLIE FLETCHER

Silvertongue

Hodder, 9780340911679

The concluding book in the fast-paced supernatural fantasy trilogy, set in a dark, menacing unLondon where statues come to life and dangers lurk around every corner. Now completely alone George and Edie must look to the past to work out their future. Stunningly cinematic storytelling and a terrific end to an epic adventure.

VIVIAN FRENCH

The Bag of Bones (Tales from the Five Kingdoms) KS3

Walker, 9781406306248

Now banished from the Five Kingdoms for her perpetual use of dark magic, the wickedest witch of all, Truda, is now plotting to spread even more evil, bring down King Frank and take over his Kingdom on his birthday. Luckily half-elf Loobly overhears her spell and plans to bring about her downfall with the help of a Prince, a troll and some bats in this hilariously wacky witch story for younger readers.

CORNELIA FUNKE

Inkdeath

Chicken House, 9781905294848

Exciting and emotional this is a compelling conclusion to the trilogy starring Meggie and her bookbinder father with the power to imagine the characters of stories into life. It will appeal more to teenagers than the target child audience of Inkheart because of its dark magic and important themes which leave lots to think about. Both very exciting and very emotional this is the sort of stylish and highly visual storytelling you just don't come across very often.

http://www.corneliafunkefans.com

http://www.inkheartmovie.com

NEIL GAIMAN AND DAVE McKEAN

Mirrormask KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747599869

Helena is born to a family of circus performers and longs to join the real world. One fateful day she wakes up to find herself in a dreamworld inhabited by a myriad of weird and wonderful creatures and about to embark on a journey…

Told through a mesmerizing and dizzying mix of art from the film; stills, sketches and striking images this is a challenging fantasy story in content and format, as visually stunning as it is scary. A book to challenge perceptions of reading.

http://www.mousecircus.com

http://www.neilgaiman.com

F. E. HIGGINS

The Bone Magician

Macmillan, 9780330444828

Dogged by scandal Pin Carpue's father disappears leaving Pin to fend for himself as an undertaker's assistant. His work brings him into contact with the mysterious Bone Magician who can raise corpses from the dead and make them speak. The Magician's assistant is even more mysterious and seems to be inextricably linked to the notorious Silver Apple Killer who targets those who have watched the act of the Bone Magician at a well-known inn. The more Pin discovers about dark bone magic the more danger he finds himself in in this intriguing and inventive tale.

STUART HILL

Last Battle of the Icemark (The Icemark Chronicles)

Chicken House, 9781905294701

Queen Thirrin's kingdom has been peaceful since her murderous daughter, Medea, was banished to the spirit world but Medea is bent on revenge and has the King of Darkness and the Ice Demons on her side. Time is running out now for the Icemark to finally triumph over evil. Epic battles and vividly drawn landscapes sweep the story along in this classic fantasy while the flashes of humour and very human characters keep the pages turning faster and faster.

BRIAN KEANEY

The Gallowglass (Dr Sigmundus)

Orchard, 9781846160899

Having confronted the evil force behind Dr Sigmundus, whose rule everyone in Tarnagar must obey, Dante now comes face to face with his twin Luther. Luther is doing evil for the Doctor and only Dante has the power to stop him. With Bea imprisoned and forced to take ichor to suppress her individuality, Dante has his work cut out in this second book in a thrilling fantasy trilogy loosely and cleverly based on the Divine Comedy.

KAZU KIBUISHI

The Stonekeeper (Amulet) KS3

Scholastic, 9780439846813

Emily and her brother move to the strange old ancestral home after the tragic death of their father. Both children are fascinated and spend hours exploring. But strange noises in the basement on the first night and the kidnap of their mother by a bizarre tentacled creature set the children investigating an underworld of all manner of monsters with the help of a pretty stone necklace Emily found hidden in the house.

Imagined by the creator of the Flight comics, Amulet is a classic fantasy graphic novel with vividly drawn landscapes and brilliant characters. Resistant readers will appreciate the low word count as well as the way the stunning illustrations carry the story.

http://www.boltcity.com/amulet

URSULA LE GUIN

Powers (Annals of the Western Shore)

Orion, 9781842556313

Set in an ancient world, Le Guin tells the mesmerizing story of a young boy, Gavir, who was stolen as a baby and sold into slavery. Although blessed with special powers enabling him to see into the future and the past, his gift fails to warn him of the tragedy to befall him. More psychological coming of age story than magical fantasy this is wonderfully written and leaves lots to think about.

JOAN LENNON

Questors

Puffin, 9780141319162

Three children from different planets are destined to save their three worlds. The problem is they're only children and are not quite sure where to start, what to look for or where to find it. With an evil villain after them they've got to act fast in this fascinating, highly original, often humorous fusion of fantasy, sci-fi and quest story.

http://www.joanlennon.co.uk

GARTH NIX

Castle (The Seventh Tower)

HarperCollins, 9780007261208

Second in a new fantasy adventure series from Nix set in the Dark World where light is precious and only one place, The Seventh Tower, ever enjoys the sun. Having now gained his spiritshadow Tal, a Chosen, must journey with Milla, an Icecarl from the Icelands below, on a dangerous quest to retrieve a sunstone, avoiding the evil forces out to destroy them. Another winning quest series with fantastically realized fantasy landscapes, believable magic, endearing characters and just the right amount of suspense.

CHRISTOPHER PAOLINI

Brisingr ▸▸

Corgi, 9780385607919

Picking up where Eldest left off, Eragon and his dragon, Saphira, have one last chance to rid the land of tyranny but will the important decisions and impossible to keep promises prove too much for the former farm-boy in this epic and involving, richly-detailed fantasy?

PHILIP PULLMAN

Northern Lights (His Dark Materials)

Scholastic, 9781407104058

Part one of an epic and captivating fantasy trilogy telling the story of an orphan Lyra, an strong-minded, free-spirited girl living in an Oxford college with a unique destiny already mapped out for her. When her friend Roger disappears mysteriously, along with other children in the area she sets out with her daemon Pantalaimon on a dangerous mission to find him. Together they journey to the frozen ice kingdom of the north, a bleak and awe-inspiring place where armoured bears rule, witch queens fly and scientists conduct sinister experiments. Pullman offers a rare gift to his readers, wrapping very big philosophical and theological themes and scientific ideas up in an engrossing and human story. Stunning in scope and scale and breathtaking in its originality it is an absolutely unforgettable story to grow up with and repays repeated reading.

http://www.philip-pullman.com

RICK RIORDAN

Percy Jackson and the Battle of the Labyrinth

Puffin, 9780141321271

Percy Jackson, the half-god every boy secretly wants to be, is back for a fourth exciting adventure through Greek mythology. Explosions, arch-enemies, underground labyrinths, fanged she-devils and bloodthirsty monsters make this Percy's most daring and dangerous mission yet.

http://www.rickriordan.com

ALAN SHEA

The Amazing Mind of Alice Makin

Chicken House, 9781904442325

Life is dull and grey for 12-year-old Alice, growing up with her stepfather in postwar London, the only excitement in her life being that conjured up by her imagination. When Reggie starts at her school, life is turned upside down. There is a strong connection between the two and her life brightens up; things previously confined to her imagination suddenly become very real. A magical story so skilfully created that you'll feel you're part of Alice's world too.

PAUL STEWART and CHRIS RIDDELL

The Lost Barkscrolls (The Edge Chronicles) KS3

Doubleday , 9780552555999

Exciting stories, one from each of the *Edge* trilogies, taken from the times of Twig, Quint and Rook. Added extras include a fold-out timeline, the two special World Book Day stories previously published and a sneak preview into the very last *Edge Chronicle* to be released in 2009. This is both a must-have for fans of the twisty turny stories and a perfect introduction to the terrifying Edgeworld pageturners, brought to life through Riddell's characteristically detailed and quirky line drawings.

FAST FORWARD

COLIN BATEMAN

Cannibal City (Titanic 2020)

Hachette, 9780340944462

Jimmy Armstrong stowed away on the modern version of the Titanic and is now one of the only humans left in the world, the shores having been ravaged by the plague, the Red Death. The future of civilization depends on him. Muggings, murders and mutinies, cannibals, gangs and a fight for survival make for an engrossing, futuristic tale which is absolutely impossible to put down.

EMMA CLAYTON

The Roar

Chicken House, 9781905294633

Set in a bleak future, twins Ellie and Miika live protected by a wall, which keeps the vicious plague-ridden animals in the outside world, or so they've been led to believe. Ellie's sudden, sinister disappearance and Miika's virtual reality game-playing reveal a far more horrible truth about their world and their destiny. Will they ever find each other again? What if the planet has only been saved for a chosen few?

Exciting new sci-fi writing tackling real issues of power and control through the irresistible medium of computer gaming.

EMILY DIAMAND

Reavers' Ransom

Chicken House, 9781905294978

In the 22nd century England is partially flooded as a result of climate change. Scotland is increasing in power and piratical, pillaging, bloodthirsty raiders threaten both lands. Add in a kidnapped Prime Minister's daughter, a talking jewel ransom and a feisty fisher-girl for an exhilarating and highly original adventure which reinvents science fiction.

SACI LLOYD

The Carbon Diaries 2015 KS4

Hachette, 9780340970157

Imagine if England introduced carbon dioxide rationing in a last-gasp attempt to combat climate change. That's exactly what happens when global warming becomes an unstoppable reality and teenager Laura Brown keeps a diary of just what life is like for her family. This is life but not quite as we know it; cutting edge fiction with a frighteningly real feel.

OISIN McGANN

Small-Minded Giants

Corgi, 9780552554732

When Sol's father goes missing, accused of murder, Sol is determined to find out why. As he searches he is pursued by the security services into both a violent underworld and a society of corporate corruption and killing. He stumbles too upon Ash Harbour, a sinister city with scarce resources, built in a hollowed-out mountain, part of a vast wasteland destroyed by climate change, and inhabited by Clockworkers whose frantic comings and goings generate the energy which keeps the system running smoothly. A fast and furious futuristic thriller for fans of Doctor Who with chilling Orwellian overtones.

http://www.oisinmcgann.com

GEMMA MALLEY

The Resistance KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747587729

2140 and after a narrow escape in *The Declaration*, Peter and Anna are now living together on the Outside as Legals. Peter is a secret agent on a mission to infiltrate the Pincent Pharma Corporation owned by his unbelievably evil grandfather with whom he feigns a reconciliation to try to discover the truth about the longevity+ drugs designed to halt ageing and revolutionise society. Pincent has an agenda of his own though and means to tear Peter and Anna apart. A dark and disturbingly plausible dystopian thriller, impossible to put down.

GRAHAM MARKS

Omega Place KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747589631

17 year old Paul runs away from an unhappy home life and becomes part of a secret activist group who vandalize CCTV cameras in order to alert the British public to the growing presence of this electronic 'Big Brother' watching our every move. It certainly injects some excitement into his existence but soon the police are on his trail and the activists discover some sinister secrets about their leader too. A tightly plotted, gritty and gripping urban thriller which asks timely and topical questions about the use of technology and how countries across the world really protect their citizens.

http://www.marksworks.co.uk

PATRICK NESS

The Knife of Never Letting Go (Chaos Walking) KS4

Walker, 9781406320756

Todd is only one month away from his coming of age birthday in a society where everyone can hear 'the Noise' of each other's thoughts all the time. Stumbling across a solitary patch of silence Todd knows he has no choice but to run, but his thoughts can still be constantly tracked by his pursuers, impeding his escape and racking up the tension for the reader. With disconcerting parallels to the increasingly overwhelming information overload in our own society, this is a hard-hitting, all too plausible story about the myriad of choices involved in growing up.

http://www.patrickness.com

WILLIAM NICHOLSON

Jango (Noble Warriors)

Egmont, 9781405231275

Seeker, Morning Star and the Wildman found that not everything in the mysterious sect of the noble fighting warrior monks, the Nomana, was as it seemed. Abandoning their dreams, each leave to follow new destinies, having gained remarkable mental and physical strength. But will this strength be enough with the warlord of the Orlan nation vowing to destroy the rocky island of Anacrea and gathering his forces? Nicholson creates vast, fully realized fantasy landscapes, very different yet still utterly convincing and relevant to our own, posing big questions about the purpose of life, love, courage and friendship. This is a mindstretching, mesmerizing and compulsively readable adventure to really make you think.

http://www.williamnicholson.co.uk

DAVID ORME

Space Plague (Full Flight 5) AA

Badger Publishing, 9781846911187

The cleverly conceived highly-illustrated, interactive series for reluctant readers which makes the reader himself the hero, able to control the course of the adventure. Here you have to save the human race from the terrible space plague spreading rapidly through the universe. Also available in packs of six for group reading.

JAMES PATTERSON

The Final Warning (Maximum Ride) ▶▶

Red Fox, 9780552558112

Max, Fang, Iggy, Nudge, Gazzy, and Angel are six extraordinary, genetically engineered, 98% human, 2% bird, kids with extraordinary powers. This is positively the last chance for the 'Flock'; there's a price on their heads from their ultimate enemy, the Uber-Director, but they're setting off on a high-speed chase across the South Pole on their most important mission yet to save the earth from global warming. These unpredictable, fast-paced, suspenseful reads based around an interesting and topical theme are real thrill-rides, sure to keep boys interested in reading.

http://www.maximumride.co.uk

http://www.jamespatterson.com

SUSAN PFEFFER

The Dead and the Gone KS4

Marion Lloyd Books, 9781407106229

Tackling the same apocalyptic event as Life as We Knew It ; an asteroid hitting the moon detonating massive climate changes, this companion story moves the devastation to New York City and shows the struggle for survival through the eyes of 17-year-old Alex. Forced to be resourceful and independent beyond his years Alex also faces massive moral dilemmas. How long do you hold out hope that your parents are still alive? Who to save when food runs out? Is it ever right to rob the dead? A harrowing, haunting story which packs an emotional punch and begs the question of the reader, just what would you do?

SUSAN PRICE

Odin's Son (Odin Trilogy) KS4

Simon & Schuster, 9781416904465

A challenging sci-fi trilogy set between Earth and Mars at a time when slavery is a fact of life and genetic design is apparent everywhere. Following the death of his mother Gift becomes obsessed by tracking down his real father and has to turn to the god Odin for some answers to his very strange inheritance in this gripping, mind-stretching read from a fabulous storyteller.

NEAL SHUSTERMAN

Unwind KS4

Simon & Shuster, 9781847382313

Three children with only one thing in common; parents conspiring to have them unwound during their teenage years, donating every part of them to the highest bidder. In an age of retrospective abortion the teenagers have only a limited time to make their escape. This chillingly imagined, all too believable, futuristic thriller will challenge the way you think about life and its importance, haunting you long after the final page.

http://www.storyman.com

SCOTT WESTERFELD

Extras KS4

Simon & Schuster, 9781847381262

An extra to the futuristic *Uglies* trilogy, this thought-provoking tale is set in a city where your fame rank determines who you are. Life there is all about who you know and what you have. Getting noticed and being talked about is everyone's number one priority making this a cutting commentary on celebrity, appearance and the media, an all too plausible future vision. Fast-paced action, extreme sports, technogadgets and love interest make it a truly gripping read too.

http://www.scottwesterfeld.com

JONNY ZUCKER

Evil Brain Chips (Full Flight 5) AA

Badger Publishing, 9781846911279

Imagine a world where babies have microchips in their brains which can be controlled by the evil President Fader. Can the Free Ones ever put a stop to his reign of terror? An addictive and accessible graphic novel adventure from the Full Flight 5 series for struggling readers.

FEAR

TOM BECKER

Nighttrap (Darkside)

Scholastic, 9781407102870

Disappear into another world. The Darkside is ruled by the Jack the Ripper's children, it's a dark and deadly dangerous secret side of London, an evil place. Nightmares prowl the streets in Darkside, bounty hunters, werewolves and vampires are everywhere and Jonathan stumbles upon it by accident. In this third book Jonathan has to break into the house of one of Darkside's most terrifying residents in order to bring the kidnapped Mrs Elwood to safety. A darkly gothic supernatural thriller to leave you holding your breath as you read.

http://www.welcometodarkside.co.uk

MALORIE BLACKMAN

The Stuff of Nightmares KS4

Random House, 9780552554633

A school trip train journey turns into a true nightmare for Kyle when Death enters his train and Kyle finds he can tune into his friends worst fears and deepest, darkest terrors, some real, some surreal and some imagined.

Discovering their fears and demons helps Kyle face his own but will Death ever release him so he can live again? Every kind of truly terrifying nightmare imaginable tumbles across the pages, making this one of those absolutely brilliant books you're powerless to put down. Just don't read it in the dark!

http://www.malorieblackman.co.uk

CHARLOTTE BRONTË (illustrated by JOHN M. BURNS)

Jane Eyre

Classical Comics, 9781906332068 (Simplified text version: 9781906332082)

A glossy, superb-quality graphic novel version of the Brontë classic which puts all the gothic horror back in with genuinely creepy illustrations which inject atmosphere, emotion and irresistible reader appeal. The series covers an ever increasing range of classics, including Shakespeare, all available in original and simplified text for a quicker or easier read.

ALEX DUVAL

Hunted (Vampire Beach)

Red Fox, 9781862304338

In this sixth instalment, some of Jason's friends in the glamorous Malibu vampire set have gone missing then reappear with no memory of what has happened to them, hunted out as part of a sinister experiment.

Try these for a fun and interesting twist on vampire literature, each episode in the series is more eagerly awaited than the last.

NEIL GAIMAN

Coraline: The Graphic Novel

Bloomsbury, 9780747594062

Teenager with attitude Coraline is bored to tears with her mundane existence until one day she finds a secret corridor behind a locked door, a corridor that takes her into a house very similar to her own with similar but much more sinister parents. Soon she is drawn into a fight to ensure her very survival. This is an up to the minute interpretation of the *Alice in Wonderland* story, stunningly reinterpreted here in graphic novel format to heighten the chilling fear factor, the kind of book where you turn the last page then start reading all over again.

http://www.mousecircus.com

http://www.neilgaiman.com

NEIL GAIMAN

The Graveyard Book

Bloomsbury, 9780747569015

Baby Bod escapes from the murderer desperate to kill his whole family and toddles into the graveyard where he is adopted by ghosts. This is the story of his growing up and learning about living among spooks and spirits, witches and werewolves, each chapter cleverly narrating every other year of his life.

Simply stunning storytelling, surreal characters, breathtaking imagination and a genuinely creepy gothic atmosphere make this another absolutely not-to-be-missed winner from Gaiman. Riddell's classic, spiky illustrations bring the characters off the page perfectly. An equally stunning adult version illustrated by Dave McKean is also available. (9780747596837)

http://www.neilgaiman.com

ALAN GIBBONS

Scared to Death (Hell's Underground) KS4

Orion, 9781842556665

Paul is implicated in not one but three sudden and unexplained deaths. In setting out to discover the truth behind the death spree he must explore his own demons and break a family curse. Set in the sinister Jack the Ripper territory of London's East End, this is a pageturning combination of tough, urban realism, horror and unpredictable fantasy as Paul revisits history to explain the present. A stunning and unpredictable fantasy peopled with demons, it catches the reader and constantly surprises with plot twists, turns and sudden deaths. Definitely the stuff nightmares are made of, from one of the best suspense authors around.

http://www.alangibbons.com

ANTHONY HOROWITZ

Necropolis (Power of Five) ▶▶

Walker, 9781406321081

The fourth book in the supernatural series sees evil rampant in the world and Hong Kong transformed into Necropolis, city of the dead, running with blood and stalked by all manner of vividly described demons, ghosts and monstrous creatures. Only five children have the power to save it. The trapped gatekeeper is their only hope.

Horowitz excels at getting inside the minds of his teenage characters and testing them to the limits. Girls will be desperate to get their hands on these thrillers too thanks to the realistically drawn female protagonist who makes an appearance in this episode.

http://www.powerof5.co.uk

http://www.anthonyhorowitz.com

PETER LANCETT

Dying for the Dark (Dark Man) KS4 AA

Ransom, 9781841676043

Dark Man lives in the shadows of society and is called upon to fight against the Shadow Masters in the struggle between good and evil. In this latest title in the series he is called to help a girl who has been badly hurt and confront those responsible. Attention-grabbing plotlines, sophisticated and sinister line drawings, a text made up of only one thousand frequently found words and a reading age of seven years make these accessible and attractive to older readers still grappling with the basics of reading.

DEREK LANDY

Playing with Fire (Skulduggery Pleasant) ▶▶

HarperCollins, 9780007257058

Stephanie's Uncle Gordon is famous for his horror fiction, but when he dies and leaves his house to 12-year-old Stephanie she soon discovers that his works of fiction were, in fact, based on all the creepy goings-on in the house. With evil forces threatening her, Stephanie finds help against the vampires and villains in the unlikely form of Skulduggery, the witty, wisecracking, singing, dancing, snappy-dressing skeleton of a dead wizard. Even dead skeletons like Skulduggery can't escape torture in this house though and that's when the battle against evil really has to begin. In this second outing everyone is out to get Valkyrie, the bungling detectives take on Baron Vengeous following his prisonbreak and investigate the outbreak of dead bodies and vampires all over Ireland. With its brilliantly drawn bad guys, dark Horowitz style humour and thrill a page plot, boys will never have read anything like this before.

http://www.skulduggerypleasant.co.uk

CLIFF McNISH

Breathe

Orion, 9781842555590

When Jack's dad dies he moves to an isolated old house with his mum and immediately senses spirits reaching out to him. The most malevolent of these is the Ghost Mother, a spirit torn apart with guilt at the death of her daughter. She draws her supernatural powers from the souls of the children she stops in their passing from the real world to the afterlife and this prevents her from falling into the Nightmare Passage of hell. Will Jack be next?

This is a tautly-written, psychological thriller. A genuinely spooky story; the kind you read at arm's length, neck prickling and with the lights on.

http://www.cliffmcnish.com

STEPHENIE MEYER

Breaking Dawn (Twilight Saga) KS4

Atom, 9781905654284

A mesmerizing new twist on the vampire romance genre which has taken the world by storm, starring Bella and her love for the good-looking vampire Edward Cullen. This final book in the bestselling series, of which the first has now been released on film, sees Bella having to decide once and for all where her fate lies; whether she has a future in the world of the immortals or is destined to remain fully human.

CHRIS PRIESTLEY and DAVID ROBERTS

Tales of Terror from the Black Ship

Bloomsbury, 9780747589877

Perched perilously on a stormy clifftop stands the Old Inn. Two poorly children, left home alone there while their father goes out to fetch the doctor, receive a visitor seeking shelter from the extreme weather who occupies the children by telling them stories. But these are no ordinary stories, each is more menacing and more macabre, more gruesome and more gory than the last. In the cold light of dawn the next day real life is even more grisly. Roberts' detailed illustrations add immensely to the creepy atmosphere of this gripping gothic horror story but *Tales of Terror*, like its predecessor, *Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror* (9780747589211), also reads perfectly aloud.

http://www.chrispriestley.blogspot.com/ http://www.talesofterror.co.uk/

BRAM STOKER and FIONA MacDONALD

Dracula

Book House, 9781905638529

Part of the Graffex series which retell the classics in highly visual form, this is an exciting new interpretation which keeps closely to the original. The full colour artwork and speech bubbles add an extra layer to the narrative. A comprehensive appendix offers information about the Eastern European vampire legends which inspired Stoker, a timeline of important events and influences on the author to help younger readers make sense of the story and a listing of screen versions to look out for.
The Man in the Iron Mask is also available. (9781905638536)

DANIEL WATERS

Generation Dead KS4

Simon & Schuster, 9781847383273

Imagine if teenagers you knew started dying then coming back to life as the 'living impaired' or 'differently biotic'. On their return the living impaired are different though and aren't always easily accepted again by their friends which leads to all kinds of occasionally violent tensions. Brilliantly mixing paranormal fiction with comedy and romance, Waters creates an uncomfortable and chilling read to make you think again about prejudice and difference. Perfect for fans of Meyer's *Twilight* series.

SARAH WRAY

The Trap KS4

Faber, 9780571239214

An American summer camp for clever kids hides a sinister secret as 15-year-old Luke finds out to his cost. The camp instructor dismisses the rumours of the disappearance of three of the campers but when coded messages start appearing in the dormitory and his friend is attacked Luke realizes he too has fallen into the trap. A genuinely creepy, occasionally shocking whodunnit to read at a sitting.

GO WILD

JOHN GROGAN

Marley ▸▸

HarperCollins, 9780007302529

Handpicked from the puppy litter, Marley quickly ingratiates himself into the heart of his new family; one loveable, furry, energy ball of a puppy quickly grows into the 'world's worst dog', expelled from obedience classes, hired by a film crew as a 'big, dumb, loopy dog', stealing what he shouldn't and dribbling on guests. Sooner or later though Marley is going to wear out…

A heartwarming, tear-jerking adaptation of Grogan's bestselling memoir, *Marley and Me*, which retains all the emotion of the adult original and gets to the heart of what pet ownership is really all about.

ALISON HAWES

Awesome Animals (First Flight) KS3 AA

Badger Publishing, 9781844248230

Part of the First Flight level 1 series for struggling readers, reading age 6. The 50% text, 50% illustration formula works fantastically here to show a range of awesome animals (many to be avoided at all costs!) offering fascinating facts about how and where they live.

BRIAN JACQUES

High Rhulain (Redwall) KS3

Puffin, 9780141319605

Bisky Mouse sets off on a hunt for treasure with his fellow creatures from Redwall Abbey, little suspecting that the evil Korvus and his ravens, the Doomwytes. are also in pursuit. Drama, danger and deadly opponents abound in a pageturning adventure. Jacques imagines completely credible fantasy worlds in which to immerse his readers and peoples them with animal characters who are almost human. Big battles, huge feasts and puzzling riddles to solve are all hallmarks of his masterful and prolific storytelling.

http://www.redwall.org

ROBIN JARVIS

Whortle's Hope (Deptford Mouselets) KS3

Hodder, 9780340855126

Whortle fieldmouse is bursting with excitement at the prospect of winning the sports contest which will earn him the position of Head Sentry, the right to watch over the meadows from the top of the barleystalks and so develops a gruelling daily training programme, spurred on by his friends. At nights though he is visited by strange brothers who tell of a time before the field was home to the fieldmice, a time of terrible and terrifying battles between good and evil. A welcome addition to the *Deptford Mice* saga, this fills in the gaps for fans but is also a springboard for new readers into the series. Bursting with action, danger, gruesome detail, history, mystery and some very narrow escapes these are real mouse eye views of our world from a prolific storyteller who excels at anthropomorphic tales such as this one.

http://www.robinjarvis.com

RON KOERTGE

Strays KS4

Walker, 9781406316124

16-year-old Ted much prefers animals to humans and, after losing his parents in a road crash, he has a particular affinity with strays, abandoned like himself, with whom he can have surreal two-way conversations. Helped along by his bizarre but loving foster family and enrolled in a new inner city high school, Ted must learn to overcome his loneliness and put his trust in humans too. Intelligent, insightful and edgy writing to make you stop and think, with flashes of devastating humour.

INGRID LEE

Dog Lost

Chicken House, 9781905294756

Badly treated and unwanted, pit bull puppy Cash finds a new home with 12-year-old Mackenzie and quickly becomes his best friend in the world. Society at large is not quite so welcoming of pit bulls though and Mackenzie's dad dumps Cash, leaving her to fend for herself in a harsh, cruel world. A well-written, heart-warming story which turns everything you've read before about vicious dogs on its head and has you willing everything to turn out well.

MICHAEL MORPURGO

Born to Run ▶▶

HarperCollins, 9780007230594

Essentially the life story of a puppy rescued from drowning to become a much-loved childhood pet, kidnapped by a greyhound racer then abandoned at the end of his racing life. In the hands of a gifted storyteller however it becomes one of the most impassioned, engrossing, emotional and memorable stories you will ever read, raising awareness of the innocent victims of the dog racing industry.

http://www.michaelmorpurgo.org

MICHELLE PAVER

Oath Breaker (Chronicles of Ancient Darkness) ▶▶

Orion, 9781842551745

The fifth part of a fantasy set in the superbly realized bleak, frozen wastelands of the Far North sees Torak on a desperate quest for revenge for the death of his closest friend, Bale. But the clans are at odds and evils of unimaginable proportions abound. This is unputdownable, unguessable reading that completely immerses the reader in Torak's unforgiving world and gives a real sense of what it would be like to be in his shoes. Gripping storytelling.

http://www.torak.info

http://www.michellepaver.com

MALCOLM ROSE

Animal Lab (Shades) AA

Evans, 9780237536169

Jamie helps out at a local animal lab. Staff at the drugs company tell him the monkeys are bald to help find a cure for baldness, his sister thinks there is an entirely different explanation. Who is Jamie to believe? Engaging story themes, realistic characters and pacy plotting but simple writing make this series perfect for hooking in those who find reading a struggle.

LAUREN ST JOHN

The Last Leopard KS3

Orion, 9781842556672

A third exciting adventure for Martine and Ben, now in a race against time to save the world's rarest leopard, Kahn, and recover the lost treasure of an African king. It is a race which will need all of Martine's magical powers with animals, survival skills and knowledge of the bush and it will push her closest friendship to its limits. Set against a vividly described African backdrop, this is a captivating animal conservation series with a strong female lead.

THOMAS WHARTON

The Shadow of Malabron (Perilous Realms)

Walker, 9781406312508

The Perilous Realm is the land where all stories come from. One night long ago Malabron tried to make all the stories into one, his story. Will, a teenager with attitude from our world, stumbles into the realm by accident and aided by a cast of story folk and Shade, the talking wolf, undertakes an epic journey back to reality. Ambitious plotting, characters to love and hate, heart-stopping bravery and simply stunning storytelling.

IMAGINE

L. BRITTNEY

Traitor's Gold (Nathan Fox)

Macmillan, 9780330454216

Second in a stunningly original series set in Elizabethan London starring undercover agent Nathan Fox and a sprinkling of Shakespeare's characters. Now highly skilled and recently returned from Venice, Nathan is dispatched to the Netherlands to capture a consignment of gold intended to pay the Spanish armies fighting there and ensure that Britain remains the strongest superpower. As if that wasn't mission enough there are stop at nothing pirates, brutal soldiers and strict religions to contend with. A stunning interweaving of dramatic action, authentic period detail, historical personalities and technological gadgetry, gory battles and spying. Cleverly set against the backdrop of Shakespeare's plays, this is absolutely unmissable, highly visual and highly addictive writing.

http://www.nathanfox-traitorsgold.co.uk/

PHILIP CAVENEY

The Eye of the Serpent (Alec Devlin)

Red Fox, 9781862306080

When Sir William and his assistant open an ancient Egyptian tomb in the Valley of the Kings they unleash a curse which devastates the lives of both. Called in to investigate, 15-year-old Alec must defeat all manner of rabid creatures, mummies and long dead spirits in this genuinely creepy historical fantasy.

EOIN COLFER

Airman ▸▸

Puffin, 9780141322216

Imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit and branded a traitor, Connor knows he only has one way out. He must win the race for flight if he is ever to see his family again or claim his princess. High adventure and daredevil action mixed with fantasy and humour set against a Victorian backdrop make for an impressive read.

http://www.eoincolfer.com

FRANZESKA G. EWART

Bima and the Water of Life KS3 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842995099

A well-told Indian story about Bima and his quest to find the water of life, part of the *Reloaded* series of classic stories and myths full of heroes and villains, evil, courage and magic for 10–14s, reading age 8.

JULIA GOLDING

The Chimera's Curse (Companions Quartet Book 4) KS3

OUP, 9780192754639

Her strength sapped after being attacked on Dartmoor by a chimera, Connie Lionheart is easy prey for the evil shapeshifter, Kullervo. He will stop at nothing to take her power and, with the mythical beasts behind him, plans to obliterate humanity. Connie has to fight back. Environmental issues and our own personal responsibility to make a difference meet Arthurian legend in this imaginative twist on the traditional good versus evil fantasy story, excitingly told.

http://www.juliagolding.co.uk

LIAN HEARN

Heaven's Net is Wide (Tales of the Otori) KS4

Picador, 9780330447454

A captivating prequel to the original *Otori* saga set in mythical medieval Japan which fills in the back stories of the characters and explains the dynasties struggles which took place before the saga opens. Warlords and warriors, assassins, death threats and terrible battles abound in an evocative and vivid historical fantasy which explores big themes of revenge, betrayal, honour, loyalty and love.

http://www.lianhearn.com/

JAMES A. OWEN

Search for the Red Dragon (Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica)

Simon & Schuster, 9781847382160

In 1917 a professor was murdered because of a very special book, the *Imaginarium Geographica*, which maps the worlds of myth and legend, folk and fairytale. One of his students was given the atlas for safekeeping and, knowing that his own life too must now be in danger, he set off with two companions on a ship to the Archipelago of Dreams. Nine years later a villain is kidnapping children here and the dragonships which crossed between the real and fantasy worlds have disappeared so the three boys are called back into action. Peter Pan, the Pied Piper, Jason and Medea all make clever cameo appearances in this imaginative fantasy adventure, the second in the series.

http://www.heretherebedragons.net

PHILIP REEVE

Here Lies Arthur

Scholastic, 9781407103587

Myrddin is a renowned bard; a conman, a traveller and a teller of tales. His sidekick Gwyna is just a small mouse of a girl but with Myrddin's transforming power she becomes a warrior, a spy or a goddess. Maybe Myrddin's magic is powerful enough to turn a warband leader into the greatest hero of all time?
This is a miniature masterpiece; at once a sparkling and emotionally engaging reimagining of how the legend of King Arthur might really have been created, a clever historical detective fiction and a superbly crafted tale about the immense power of story.

http://www.mortalengines.co.uk

PHILIP REEVE

Mothstorm (Larklight) KS3

Bloomsbury, 9780747589112

Larklight is a huge and sprawling Victorian mansion where Arthur (Art) Mumbleby lives with his father, Reverend Marmaduke and his intensely irritating little sister, Myrtle – and it just happens to be travelling through space. In the third story in the series the wild and wacky family travel to a planet in the remote reaches of outer space to rescue the Cruets from an ominous, incoming cloud and to save the universe. A completely original and fantastical Victorian space adventure told with panache and highly entertaining period jokes.

http://www.larklight.com

ANGIE SAGE

Queste (Septimus Heap) KS3

Bloomsbury, 9780747594147

More alchemy and dark adventure as seventh son of a seventh son, Septimus Heap, joins forces with an ancient alchemist to try to journey to a place where all time meets to free Nicko and Snorri who have been trapped back in time. An original and very funny, fantasical series packed with wacky characters, wit and wizardry and impossible to stop reading. Short chapters and illustrations add to the appeal.

http://www.septimusheap.co.uk

MARCUS SEDGWICK

The Kiss of Death

Orion, 9781842556894

Many years after *My Swordhand is Singing,* Peter is still searching for the Shadow Queen, this time along the canalways of Venice where she is amassing an army of Undead for a final confrontation. The secrets surrounding Marko and Sorrel's fathers and a missing tiara are also skillfully revealed. Nothing fascinates like the vampire myth and with its bleak landscapes, 18th century setting, shadowy Venetian backdrop and lyrical language painting vivid pictures this is a well-judged, tautly written tale which pulls the reader in with a vice-like grip. Chilling even before the dead come to life, classy and understated, with genuinely tense and scary moments it is gothic horror writing at its best.

http://www.marcussedgwick.com

MATTHEW SKELTON

Endymion Spring

Puffin, 9780141320342

In present day Oxford, Blake finds an ancient book of dragon skin in the college library and strange and dangerous things start happening to him. As he looks, words appear on its pages meant only for him. The book binds him inextricably to a printer's devil with the name of Endymion Spring working for Gutenberg in the 15th century, as printing was becoming widespread. This is no ordinary book however, for the secret of all knowledge is held within its pages. Switching cleverly between the centuries, this is both an intriguing story of real history and a modern mystery.

INDULGE

RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH

Ten Things I Hate About Me KS4

Marion Lloyd Books, 9780439943710

Jamie has all the usual teenage things to worry about; school, music, mates, fashion but always finds an excuse to avoid shopping trips, parties and sleepovers. At home Jamie becomes Jamilah and, as an Australian-Lebanese-Muslim, is subject to the strict rules imposed by her father which are posted on the fridge door. Jamie's is an authentic and very funny voice which brilliantly vocalizes the conflict of cultures faced by many young people. Arguably even better than *Does My Head Look Big in This*?

HOLLY BLACK

Ironside KS4

Simon & Schuster, 9781847380630

Picking up in the dark and unpredictable world of Faerie where *Tithe* and *Valiant* left off, changeling Kaye decides she must declare her love for Lord Roiben but in accordance with court tradition must complete a quest; to find a fairy who can tell an untruth, something she knows doesn't exist. One thing she can do though is find the human child whose place she took and return her but in doing so she risks putting herself in even more danger. Curses, court rivalry, ice-cold queens, romances, betrayals and deceptions make for a captivating read.

http://www.blackholly.com/

SUZANNE BUGLER

Meet Me at the Boathouse KS4

Hodder, 9780340932292

When Danny follows her home one day Louise is flattered. Looking for excitement, she soon falls for him although her schoolwork starts to suffer and her friends warn her off. Everything changes when Danny's friend is killed and his love becomes obsessive, menacing and ultimately destructive in this compelling and claustrophobic story.

MEG CABOT

Airhead

Macmillan, 9780330460682

Em is a judgemental genius while Nikki is an airheaded supermodel. Both attend the opening of a new megastore where a freak accident causes their lives to collide and their brains to swap over. Far-fetched but fun this is a spectacular start to a new Cabot series.

http://www.megcabot.com

KATE CANN

Possessing Rayne KS4

Scholastic, 9781407102467

Rayne can't wait to escape her family, grotty estate and controlling boyfriend so sets out to make a new life for herself in this spooky, suspenseful gothic story with a hint of romance set in a sinister old house. Cann catches you up in her characters' worlds and never fails to deliver.

CATHY CASSIDY

Ginger Snaps KS3

Puffin, 9780141322124

The newly made over Ginger and her best friend Shannon find their friendship falling apart over a new friend and boys. Another very readable story with important messages about making and keeping friends, fitting in, looking beyond appearances and staying true to yourself from the queen of tweenage fiction.

SUSIE DAY

Big Woo! KS4

Scholastic, 9781407106861

Serafina is a typical teenager; her far far away dad is about to marry a monster and her mum sends her to see Crazy Pete who prods her brain to see if she's gone mental. She's sort of in love and has some weird friends, especially online. Being nearly 16 she's set herself a happiness deadline and has to achieve everything on her list by a certain date if she's to be happy. *Big Woo!* is Serafina's blog captured in a book; insignificant, honest and very funny.

GRACE DENT

Shiraz BW: The Ibiza Diaries (Diary of a Chav) KS4

Hodder, 9780340970638

The outrageous Shiraz Bailey Wood is off to Ibiza with her best friend who managed to talk her dad into paying for 2 plane tickets. She thinks she's in for the holiday of a lifetime but the best laid plans have a habit of going badly, and in Shiraz' case, hilariously wrong. Dent has an uncanny knack of winning over even the least enthusiastic girl readers with comedy storylines and true-to-life characters.

SARAH DESSEN

The Truth About Forever KS4

Puffin, 9780141322926

Model student, perfect daughter, devoted girlfriend; Macy wants everyone to believe that everything in her life is fine but under the surface Macy is a mess, struggling to accept the death of her father. Meeting a new group of very alternative friends helps her learn to live with herself and her circumstances and move on.

Never one to skirt around big issues, Dessen is a powerful and humorous writer who helps you think about the important things in life through some of the most real and inspiring characters you'll ever meet in the pages of a book. Jacqueline Wilson meets Jodi Picoult cleverly packaged for the teenage market.

SHARON DOGAR

Waves KS4

Chicken House, 9781905294602

15-year-old Hal and his family always summer by the sea but this year is different because his sister had an accident on the beach last year and is still lying in a coma. Charley haunts his thoughts as he relives their last holiday together revisiting places and people they loved. Part mystery thriller, part romance, part supernatural timeslip story but completely impossible to put down.

JENNY DOWNHAM

Before I Die KS4

Definitions, 9781862304871

Given only a few short months to live, 16-year-old Tessa compiles her 'To Do Before I Die' list, desperate to cram as much life as she can into the time she has left before leukaemia claims her. Her list is extreme, including sex, drugs and crime. Her wildly fluctuating feelings and those of her friends and family are heartbreakingly evoked. Despite the bleakness of the subject this is a hopeful, life-affirming story you won't ever forget.

NICOLE DRYBURGH

The Way I See It

Hachette, 9780340956922

Diagnosed with a malignant tumour on the spine at 11, Nicole made a full recovery before suffering an almost fatal brain haemorrhage two years later. Now 18, blind and almost confined to a wheelchair she remains positive and determined to make the most of life. This is an awesome, inspirational and unforgettable true story of one girl's fight back against illness and an honest and poignant reminder of how important it is to never give up hope.

FIONA DUNBAR

Blue Gene Baby (Silk Sisters) KS3

Orchard, 9781846162312

When Rorie and Elsie's parents suddenly disappear they try anything to escape their evil uncle guardian and set off to find them. In this second attempt the sisters are taken in by the fashionista Nolita Newbuck but soon discover she's not what she seems. An unusual adventure for younger teens.

ECHO FREER

Magenta Sings the Blues (Magenta Orange) KS3

Hodder, 9780340944189

Magenta's friends haven't invited her to join them in the Battle of the Bands so she's going to have to come up with another plan to attract the attention of the hottest boy in the school AND show her ex what he's lost. Not easy when you're tone deaf with two left feet. Very funny, contemporary tweenage comedy.

ANNA GODBERSEN

The Luxe KS4

Puffin, 9780141323367

A glitzy, glamorous new *Sex and the City* style series set in New York City in 1899 and starring Society's elite. Glittering parties, gossip, gorgeous guys, beautiful debutantes, forbidden love, dangerous liaisons, secret affairs and whispered scandals are all here but it all ends in disaster…

The Luxe and the next episode, *Rumours* (9780141323374), offer perfect escapism – you'll be powerless to put them down.

CHRIS HIGGINS

A Perfect Ten KS3

Hodder, 9780340950692

Nothing less than perfection will do for Eva in the prettiness, popularity and intelligence stakes and she'll stop at nothing to be the star of her gymnastics club. The arrival of new girl Patty coincides with her mum going into rehab and her best friend going out with her brother. The only thing Eva can control is her weight with potentially disastrous consequences. Higgins is truly in tune with her tweenage audience producing positive and realistic stories about friends, family and accepting yourself to make you laugh and cry by turns.

TONYA HURLEY

Ghostgirl

Headline, 9780755347704

Fed up with feeling as though she's wearing an invisibility cloak, Charlotte decides to get herself noticed and so far her plot appears to be working. Even choking to death on a gummy bear isn't going to stop her being accepted into the cool clique in this completely original, very funny, stylishly-packaged story about feeling left out, life and death and, ultimately, accepting who you are.

http://www.ghostgirl.com

http://www.tonyahurleyproductions.com

JOANNA KENRICK

Babyfather KS4 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842994696

One of the ever-growing 'gr8 reads' series for 12–16s with a reading age of 7, all with sophisticated and eye-catching covers. *Babyfather* tells the story of 15-year-old Mikey. He doesn't do responsibility, so when his girlfriend tells him she's pregnant he'll do anything to find a way out of being a dad.

ALICE KUIPERS

Life on the Refrigerator Door KS4

Macmillan, 9780330456456

A life-changing year in the life of 15-year-old Claire and her busy doctor mother is documented here through the notes they leave for each other. Tragically they don't realize their time together is running out. To say any more here would be to spoil what is an immensely powerful and poignant story about not taking our relationships for granted and making time for the people we love most in the world.

KATE LE VANN

Rain KS4

Piccadilly Press, 9781853409554

Sent off to live with her grandmother for the summer, Rain stumbles across her mum's old diary, written when she was 16, the same as Rain, and pregnant with her. Rain sets out with Harry to rediscover the places her mum describes and finds herself experiencing many of the same emotions, finally falling in love with the boy redecorating her grandmother's house. A very clever, very readable story of the bonds between mother and daughter, the dawning realisation that your parents are human and that you must make your own life separate from them.

TANYA LEE STONE

A Bad Boy Can be Good for a Girl KS4

Quercus, 9781847244611

Three very different American girls become friends because they've all had the misfortune to meet and fall head over heels in love with the same bad boy in this true-to-life story. Think of this brilliantly-observed, cleverly-told, quirky story like a gossip with your best friends. You'll laugh and cry along with the characters, then secretly resolve never to make the same mistake yourself!

Watch out for an ingenious use of a school library book too…

AMANDA LEES

Kumari: Goddess of Destiny (Kumari Trilogy) KS3

Piccadilly Press, 9781853409929

Kumari is a young goddess-in-training. Having saved the Hidden Kingdom she now wants to focus all her energies on becoming a proper goddess in this final story but receives a phone call summoning her back to the World Beyond. Although much has changed there her enemies are still watching and there's a chance she can avenge her mother's death – at a price. An addictive blend of comedy, fantasy and adventure with a loveable heroine.

http://amandalees.com

SUE LIMB

Zoe and Chloe: Out to Lunch KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747582731

Having foiled the attempt by the Beast to spoil their best friendship, Zoe and Chloe are back, this time planning a trip to Newquay for a caravan holiday of a lifetime. Everything is blissful until the Beast himself turns up…

Sparking chicklit for teenagers.

MELISSA MARR

Wicked Lovely KS4

HarperCollins, 9780007263073

Aislinn has always been able to see faeries in the mortal world but now one of them, the King of Faery is stalking her, determined she will be his Summer Queen no matter what, in this fully-imagined, edgy urban faery tale for fans of Holly Black and Stephenie Meyer. First in an amazing new trilogy.

JOANNA NADIN

My So-Called Life

OUP, 9780192755261

Fed up with being 'earthshatteringly, tragically normal', living her nice life with her nice parents and nice friends at a nice school in a nice area, Rachel Riley decides to inject some excitement into her life so she can become both tragic and interesting. 14-year-old Rachel's snappy diary entries will turn even the most reading resistant girls into enthusiastic readers and leave them wondering just how the author knew quite so much about what goes on in their heads!

LUISA PLAJA

Split by a Kiss KS4

Corgi, 9780552556804

Having moved to America, Jo is desperate to reinvent herself and become part of the cool 'It' crowd – but is much more like the average outsider. The opportunity to join the popular people and win an attractive boyfriend into the bargain arises – but at what price? Plaja cleverly explores Jo's conflicting emotions and split personality in a fun, easy read, bursting with teen angst and identity crises.

http://www.luisaplaja.com

LIZ RETTIG

Jumping to Confusions

Corgi, 9780552557573

Cat is confused. While she is fat and boring her twin sister Tess is blonde and gorgeous, so why would her dad's boss's son, Josh, be immune to her charms and show an interest in plain old Cat instead? Cat thinks she has the answer but sometimes jumping to conclusions can be very dangerous indeed. A startlingly true-to-life insight into what really goes on in teenage girls' heads from a very witty author.

NATSUKI TAKAYA

Fruits Basket v21 KS4

Tokyopop, 9781427806826

The latest in the hugely popular Japanese shōjo manga series in which the orphan Tohru is taken in by the mysterious wood-dwelling Sohma family who harbour a secret – when hugged by a member of the opposite sex or under stress they turn into their zodiac animal. In this episode Kyo Sohma confesses his role in Tohru's mother's death. Will she still love him now?

SANDI TOKSVIG

Girls are Best

Doubleday, 9780385615242

A compendium of fascinating facts and stories about women achievers through the ages – the famous and, more interestingly, the not so famous. Toksvig has clearly done her homework, for everyone from female gladiators to the goddess of beer is here and even scientific proof that women's brains are every bit as good as men's. A book to make girls believe in themselves and their ability to change the world, in fact according to this book, they've already started!

VARIOUS

Behind the Scenes: Fashion (Download) AA

Rising Stars, 9781846800443

One of a series of hi-lo books for struggling readers which uses contemporary topics and popular culture to enable teenagers to plug back into reading. A short illustrated story connects to supporting magazine style information pages packed with colour photographs and appropriate captions.

GABRIELLE ZEVIN

Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747591658

Naomi Porter is forced to put the jigsaw pieces of her life back together again after a serious head injury wipes the last 3½ years from her memory. With her parents divorced and her father about to remarry, a mother she is supposed to hate, friends she no longer likes and a boyfriend she doesn't know, Naomi has a lot of work to do making new and different choices, reinventing herself and finding out who she really is in this arresting and involving story about growing up and forging your own identity.

INVESTIGATE

PETER ABRAHAMS

Into the Dark (Echo Falls Mystery) KS3

Walker, 9781406300307

Crime fiction with a difference by Stephen King's favourite writer starring 13-year-old supersleuth Ingrid Levin-Hill in which the clues are cunningly revealed to the reader before the protagonist. In this latest case Ingrid discovers a body in the snow and her grandfather is accused of the murder. In digging deeper to prove his innocence Ingrid uncovers long-hidden community and family secrets. Ingrid is a superbly realized heroine; just the sort of smart, funny, courageous character girls will want more of.

ANNE CASSIDY

The Bone Room KS4 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842994498

Paul and Lulu are desperate to find out the truth about the Bone Room but find themselves plunged into terrible danger and a mystery involving drugs and people smuggling. A gripping read for 13+ readers with a reading age of 8 by an accomplished and award-winning crime writer.

SIMON CHESHIRE

The Hangman's Lair and Other Case Files (Saxby Smart: Private Detective) KS3

Piccadilly Press, 9781853409943

Saxby Smart, private detective, takes on cases from his fellow pupils at school and solves them all from his garden shed. Here he must outwit a local gang, retrieve a stolen diary and unmask a stage medium. In these detective stories with a twist Saxby cleverly unearths the clues and gives readers a chance to turn detective, solving the mystery for themselves.

EOIN COLFER and ANDREW DONKIN

Artemis Fowl: The Graphic Novel

Puffin, 9780141322964

Visually stunning and highly sophisticated this graphic version of *Artemis Fowl* captures all of the wit, action and ingenuity of the original story bringing the criminal teenage mastermind to a whole new readership.

http://www.artemisfowl.co.uk

http://www.eoincolfer.com

EOIN COLFER

Half Moon Investigations

Puffin, 9780141320809

Fletcher Moon may be half-size and still at school but that doesn't stop him being a fully qualified detective called in to crack many a petty crime that others can't. In this particular schoolyard investigation Fletcher, working for a pink and sparkly Barbie girl, finds himself kidnapped by the chief suspect, framed for fire-starting, flees custody with a known criminal and stars in the school talent show. The internal monologues running in Fletcher's head as he pieces together his evidence are ingenious. Every bit as well drawn as Artemis, Fletcher is definitely a character to watch out for in future.

http://www.halfmoonvestigations.co.uk

http://www.eoincolfer.co.uk

JOSHUA DODER

Grk Smells a Rat KS3

Andersen Press, 9781842706602

This adventure sees schoolboy detective Tim and his crazy canine side-kick Grk in Delhi caught up in a publishing racket which involves children working as slaves. Despite the dangers lurking at every turn, the dynamic duo are determined to bring the criminals to justice. An ideal easy read series for action adventure fans who like something just a little bit different.

http://www.joshuadoder.com

JAMILA GAVIN

The Robber Baron's Daughter

Egmont, 9781405242936

Nettie lives a pampered, privileged, almost perfect life, but her world shatters with the mysterious disappearance of her tutor Miss Kovachev and the revelation of some dark family secrets in this page-turning mystery, superbly told.

ANTHONY HOROWITZ

The Greek who Stole Christmas (Diamond Brothers) KS3

Walker, 9781406304855

Tim and his younger brother Nick, 'the world's most defective detectives', are called in to investigate death threats made to Minerva, pop singer and movie actress, in this latest case for the indefatigable Diamond Brothers. The trouble is she seems to have so many enemies, including Santa, it's difficult to know just who is out to kill her. She also has a soft spot for Tim which does make it difficult for him to keep his mind on the case. A pacy, detective spoof guaranteed to keep you reading.

http://www.anthonyhorowitz.com

KAREN KING

Dognapped! (Amy Carter Mysteries) KS3

Top That!, 9781846666032

When a prize-winning dog goes missing it's up to new girl detective Amy Carter to get her Gran's dog back safe and sound. Readers help solve the mystery alongside her by downloading free podcast clues to help piece together the evidence and try to solve the case.

JENNIFER McMAHON

Promise Not to Tell KS4

Orion, 9780752882987

Kate's best friend was brutally killed as a child, her killer never brought to justice. On the night Kate returns home many years later when her mother becomes ill with Alzheimer's another child is horrifically killed. Memories come flooding back and Kate's past comes back to haunt her. This dark, disturbing, don't read it at night ghost story with a difference constantly takes you by surprise.

http://www.jennifer-mcmahon.com

CATHERINE MacPHAIL

Ride of Death (Nemesis 4)

Bloomsbury, 9780747582717

The final crime thriller of this tense, tautly-written and edgy quartet sees Ram finally hunted down by his nemesis, the Dark Man for a final confrontation. Waking up with no memory of who he is or what has happened to him, Ram is sure only that time is running out for everyone. MacPhail cleverly lets the reader into Ram's head, solving the mystery alongside him. Fast-paced chapters, snappy time frame, exciting cliffhanger chapter endings and a quick-thinking, tackle-anything hero boys will all want to be.

http://www.macphailbooks.com

ALAN MOORE and DAVE GIBBONS

Watchmen

Titan Books, 9781852860240

Set in an alternate America in the 1980s with the world on the brink of nuclear war, superheroes have been outlawed by the government. When one of their number is suspiciously murdered the retired heroes are forced back into action to uncover a terrible murder plot, a conspiracy which could change the world forever. A classic comic book with dark overtones.

ANTONIO PAGLIARULO

In the Club (Celebutantes) KS4

Red Fox, 9781862305069

With the school year almost at an end, the Hamilton triplets, heiresses to a multi-million dollar media empire, are planning their holiday in Capri. A murder at the opening of their latest exclusive club puts an end to their plans; fellow prep school student, Fifth Duke of Asherton, killed by a pink stiletto. The paparazzi must be silenced and the terrible crime solved in the latest case for the sassy sisters.

TOM PALMER

Foul Play (Football Detective) KS3

Puffin, 9780141323671

Obsessed with football and crime-fighting, Danny is out investigating when he spots England football hero, Sam Roberts, being bundled into the stadium late at night. Announced kidnapped the next day and held to ransom for £10,000, Danny is determined to solve the crime, but at what cost to himself? Fast-paced crime fiction with masses of football appeal for resistant readers.

http://www.tompalmer.co.uk

SUZANNE PHILLIPS

Burn KS4

Macmillan, 9780330442299

Horrifically abused as a child and cruelly bullied by his fellow students at high school, Cameron finally snaps and commits an unthinkable crime, but just how guilty is he of his actions? What could have been done to prevent such a terrible crime? Shocking, disturbing and difficult to read, this is one of those books that feels very real but you wish it wasn't. A book to make both bullies and their victims think.

HENRY PORTER

The Master of the Fallen Chairs (The House of Skirl)

Orchard, 9781846166259

13-year-old orphan Kim lives with his guardian, servants and tutor in a creaky, old tumbledown house, Skirl, where nothing is as it seems. One of the servant girls goes missing, then a stranger arrives in the dead of night claiming close family ties. Overflowing with murder, mystery and magic, and crackling with suspense and peopled with larger than life characters, this is the first of a new and refreshingly original fantasy adventure trilogy.

MALCOLM ROSE and DAVE HILL

Scene of the Crime

Kingfisher, 9780753413333

Schoolgirl Amanda finds herself suspect number one in a murder hunt when police find a man's body in the railway yard. Readers have to crack this case for themselves using a diary, a crime file of evidence, interviews, CCTV footage, fingerprints and DNA testing in this ingenious, interactive forensic science mystery, perfect for CSI fans.

PAUL STEWART and CHRIS RIDDELL

Legion of the Dead (Barnaby Grimes) KS3

Corgi, 9780552556262

Tick-tock lad Barnaby Grimes is a regular sight around the rooftops of Dickensian London, running his errands and always on the lookout for a new crime to solve and a new horror to battle against. Here it's a legion of zombies and mysterious tinkling bells in a graveyard at dead of night. Terrific page-turning gothic horror fiction with intricately detailed illustrations.

JENNY VALENTINE

Broken Soup KS4

HarperCollins, 9780007229659

Rowan is consumed with curiosity when a mysterious boy she has never met pushes a negative she didn't drop into her hand and disappears into a heaving crowd of shoppers. It is a welcome distraction from the burden of responsibilities she shoulders alone at home; caring for her little sister after her parents' difficult divorce and her mum's descent into serious depression, and it sets off a chain of events and new relationships which will help heal her broken life. Valentine is a compelling, life-affirming, thought-provoking writer who cleverly reinvents both mystery and issue-based fiction tackling important themes like loss, love and grief through the stories of characters we really care about.

CATHERINE WEBB

The Doomsday Machine (Horatio Lyle)

Atom, 9781905654024

Horatio Lyle, ex-Special Constable, eccentric scientist and inventor and reluctant amateur detective, doesn't much care for the Tseiquin and everything they represent, but he can't just ignore the news of a plot to murder them. He leaps to the rescue with his reformed pickpocket sidekick Tess and wise dog Tate, little thinking of the bother he might bring upon them all. Billed by the publisher as 'Sherlock Holmes written by Terry Pratchett', these bizarre but brilliant tales are packed with action and should satisfy fans of old-fashioned adventure, the supernatural, detective and fantasy fiction.

LAUGH

DOMINIC BARKER

The Boy Who Set Sail on a Questionable Quest (Blart 3) KS3

Bloomsbury, 9780747593577

Anti-hero Blart's peace is disrupted once again when he is called to rescue a damsel in distress, kidnapped by the man who wants to marry her. Hindered rather than helped by his companions, Olaf the Innocent and Kupverstich the Strange, Blart battles a giant, deformed octopus, cut-throat pirates and the Guild of Assassins who are out to kill him.

A *Shrek*-like parody of swords and sorcery fantasy with larger than life characters, off the wall, laugh-out loud humour and delicious verbal invention.

PHILIP CAVENEY

Prince of Pirates (Sebastian Darke) KS3

Red Fox, 9781862302570

Sebastian, cheeky, backchatting buffalope, Max, and pintsized but powerful warrior, Cornelious, embark on another madcap adventure, this time setting off on a dangerous sea journey to rescue the lost treasure of a pirate king. Of course they encounter every danger and dark deed imaginable en route from feisty female sea captains to giant lizards and wonder if they'll ever get out alive. Fast paced, funny and studded with sparkling buffalope one liners this is perfect reading for *Shrek* fans.

JIMMY DOCHERTY

The Ice-Cream Con KS3

Chicken House, 9781905294480

After being mugged twice in ten minutes on his rundown council estate, Jake Drake decides to con the criminals and embarks on an ambitious plan to start a rumour about the biggest, baddest gangster in town that never was. Unfortunately Jake's plan backfires and the trouble becomes more real than he could have ever imagined in this inventive comedy thriller which reads aloud like a dream at lower KS3.

CLIVE GIFFORD

So You Think You Know the Simpsons?

Hodder, 9780340917152

An updated version of the bestselling quiz book about the world's favourite and funniest family. One hundred new questions make a mind-boggling total of one thousand one hundred, divided into easy, medium and hard so you're guaranteed a new one every time, with answers provided at the back. Boys are mad about beating each other and will compete for hours. Not the book to buy for a quiet library but perfect for sparking interest in and reading of the original comic books.

NORMAN HUNTER

The Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm KS3

Red Fox, 9781862307360

A classic collection of very funny episodes starring the eccentric and absent-minded inventor whose madcap ideas always land him in bother. Stunning Heath Robinson illustrations bring the stories magically to life.

JEFF KINNEY

Diary of a Wimpy Kid KS3

Puffin, 9780141324906

Part journal, part comic book, this is an authentic boy diary adapted from the online cartoon at FunBrain by popular demand. Junior high schooler Greg is desperate to get ahead in the popularity stakes and win girls, but his efforts are constantly and hilariously thwarted by his family and friends. Packed with appeal for resistant readers who will appreciate seeing the trouble that Greg gets into in the cartoon illustrations and eagerly await his further adventures, Wimpy Kid is rapidly and deservedly developing a huge cult following.

http://www.wimpykid.com

http://www.funbrain.com

MICHAEL LAWRENCE

Kid Swap (Jiggy McCue) KS3

Orchard, 9781408302736

Jiggy McCue is in trouble again. This time his parents have signed him up for a reality TV programme, sending him off to live with another family, his every move captured on camera.

Cliffhanger chapter endings and disgusting flick pictures keep the pages turning faster in this series of Jiggy McCue adventures, all laugh out loud, razor sharp, wickedly funny reads.

http://www.wordybug.com

HILARY McKAY

Forever Rose (Casson Family) KS3

Hachette, 9780340931073

The fifth and final story in the quirky and colourful Casson family saga sees Rose take a starring role. Life is not much fun being the youngest and she often finds herself home alone as the others are all out leading more exciting lives. SATs are on the horizon too, lucky then she has the Christmas school trip to look forward to and her best friend Molly's 'One Big Idea' to make happen. Warm and witty, this sharply observed domestic comedy reveals both the frustrations and satisfactions of family life where you're always loved no matter what.

IAN OGILVY

Measle and the Doompit (Measle Stubbs Adventures) KS3

OUP, 9780192726230

Mayhem breaks out on a school trip when Measle's enemy, Toby, pushes him into the dark doompit where the werewolves, giant ants, abominable snowman and gorgon all live. Not only must Measle escape, he also has to rescue his school friends and wreak revenge on Toby. Inventive storytelling, witty jokes, rapidfire delivery and zany plots guarantee these magical adventure stories a wide readership.

http://www.ianogilvy.com

SIMON PAGE and MARK WARNER

It All Went Horribly Wrong KS3 AA

Heinemann, 9780435213879

One of a comprehensive hi-lo series of 'real books' aiming to build real confidence in struggling readers this collection of wonderfully wacky real-life stories of things which went horribly wrong has a reading age of 6-7 and should prove irresistible to boys especially.

DAV PILKEY

Captain Underpants and the Preposterous Plight of the Purple Potty People KS3

Scholastic, 9781407103600

George, Harold and the bionic hamster are back in a backwards reality where the teachers care and have a sense of humour, the librarian lets you read banned books and the school canteen serves up 5* meals. Trying to carry this hyper-reality into their own world proves a big mistake for the boys discover evil versions of themselves not to mention Captain Blunderpants, who plans to destroy their hometown. It's up to the elderly grandparents to save the day – and the boys! Part novel, part flip-o-rama, part comic strip and written to include all the spelling mistakes of its heroes this is an easy to read, laugh-a-minute series boys devour.

http://www.pilkey.com

http://www.scholastic.com/captainunderpants

KJARTAN POSKITT

Urgum and the Googoobah KS3

Scholastic, 9781407108117

The Lost Desert has never known an Axeman as fierce or as furious as Urgum. He can catch cannonballs in his teeth, eat live bulls and carry cobras down his vest. He and his seven barbarian sons love nothing better than a gory battle to the death. In this third adventure, Urgum is forced to foster an abandoned baby boy left on his cave step who is subsequently kidnapped. Cue Urgum and sons to the rescue! Philip Reeve's finely detailed and cartoon illustrations bring the comical characters leaping off the page. Quirky, laugh-out loud funny and packed with witty wordplay.

http://www.urgum.co.uk

ANDY STANTON

Mr Gum and the Dancing Bear KS3

Egmont, 9781405241793

The next riotous story in the award winning series starring nasty as ever Mr Gum, bears, sea captains, sailing ships and horrendous villains. Quirky illustrations and wacky wordplay make these humorous books irresistible comfort reading for lower end KS3.

JEREMY STRONG

Weird KS3

Puffin, 9780141322025

Fizz and Josh both have to do work experience at an old people's home but soon find that life there is anything but boring, what with escape tunnels, tree snails, donkeys and annoying little sisters. Sharply observed, laugh a page writing, perfect for those who struggle to even pick up a book.

DANNY WALLACE

Yes Man KS4

Ebury Press, 9780091927905

A random comment by a taxi driver inspires comedian Danny Wallace to start saying yes to everything in an insane bid to be more open to opportunity and make his life more interesting. This is the inspiring, drily humorous, feel-good story of just where his spur of the moment decision takes him which inspired the big screen movie.

http://www.dannywallace.com

DAVID WALLIAMS

The Boy in the Dress ▶▶

HarperCollins, 9780007279036

Daytime TV watching, football playing Dennis doesn't have much to look forward to with his mother gone and his boring life in a boring town. He does have his dreams to follow though and a way of being whoever he wants to be in this surprisingly moving and memorable celebration of difference. Written by one half of the *Little Britain* team, it's also brilliantly funny with Quentin Blake's illustrations adding an extra dimension.

LOOK BACK

MARK BARRATT

Joe Rat KS3

Red Fox, 9781862302181

Joe survives by scavenging in the rat-infested sewers of London's East End. His life starts to look up when he is befriended by Bess, a runaway girl in danger but they are soon thrown headlong into a dangerous adventure. A brilliant and dramatic story of life in Victorian London.

THERESA BRESLIN

The Medici Seal KS4

Corgi, 9780552554473

Pursued by a brigand with murder in mind, rescued from drowning and apprenticed to the great da Vinci, young Matteo witnesses some fabulously creative and boundary-breaking work, but he also harbours a secret that da Vinci's employer, Cesare Borgia, and the Medicis would, literally, kill for. Well-researched and full of murder, doublecrossing and intrigue, this is a gripping historical thriller which offers a fabulous insight into da Vinci's mind and world.

http://www.theresabreslin.co.uk

THERESA BRESLIN

The Nostradamus Prophecy KS4

Corgi, 9780552557214

A stunningly evocative story of soothsayers and seers, plots and poisons set in the turbulent times of late 16th century France, a time when the young King Charles ridicules Nostradamus' warning of massacre made to the French court, although his mother warns him to be wary. The minstrel's daughter, Melisande, also receives a message and evil does indeed befall her family. As Nostradamus' death approaches he leaves some important parchments to Melisande which will determine the French royal line – if she has the courage to use them.

http://www.theresabreslin.co.uk

LINDA BUCKLEY-ARCHER

The Tar Man (Time Quake Trilogy)

Simon & Schuster, 9781416917113

An accident with an anti-gravity machine catapulted Peter and Katy back into 1763 in *Gideon and the Cutpurse*. In this second brilliant time travel tale with perfectly developed parallel storylines, matters get worse with Peter stuck in the 17th century and the evil Tar Man taking his place in the 21st. With NASA unwilling to intervene it's up to Katy to sort things out while Tar Man wreaks havoc.

GRACE CAVENDISH

Haunted (Lady Grace Mysteries) KS3

Red Fox, 9781862307117

The latest in a hugely popular series about Lady Grace, a maid of honour at the Court of Queen Elizabeth, sees Grace investigating the mystery of the ghost, said to be a murdered Earl, haunting a nobleman's estate. Rich in period detail, these titles are an addictive introduction to historical fiction.

SALLY GARDNER

The Red Necklace KS4 ▸▸

Orion, 9781842556344

Returning to Paris from exile in London, young Yann is tasked with two dangerous missions; to uncover the deadly deeds of a secret society and its evil Master and to save a young girl from the guillotine. Set against the backdrop of a bloody Revolution, Gardner conjures up memorable characters, paints a terrific portrait of the unrest and ultimately creates a fast-moving, historical thriller threaded with magic and madness and lots of clever plot twists.

http://www.sallygardner.net

MORRIS GLEITZMAN

Once

Puffin, 9780141320632

Nine-year-old Felix has been placed in a Polish orphanage for safety by his parents. When the German soldiers come and start burning the nuns' books Felix knows he must escape and make sure his parents, who are booksellers, are safe. His journey through Nazi-occupied Poland is a dangerous one, but Felix is taken in by Barney, a dentist who hides and protects Jewish children. When they are discovered, Barney is forced to make the ultimate sacrifice. A tragic (and true) story simply told, shot through with flashes of comedy and courage, friendship and hope. One you can't help thinking about when it's over. The sequel, *Then*, has just been published (9780141324821).

http://www.morrisgleitzman.com

JOANNE HARRIS

Runemarks KS4 ▸▸

Corgi, 9780552555753

Born with a gift for magic, denoted by a rusty runemark on her hand, the symbol of the old gods, Maddy Smith loves her special powers even if they do make her an outcast in the village. Here they lead her on a dangerous adventure to the World Below, throwing her into the company of mischievous goblins, monsters and great Norse gods. Almost realistic magic, myth and mayhem make this a hugely enjoyable story for discerning readers with plenty of plot threads to untangle.

http://joanne-harris.co.uk

MARY HOOPER

Newes from the Dead KS4

Red Fox, 9781862303638

Set in Cromwellian England and based on a true story, this is a fascinating story of a young girl who is sentenced to infanticide after being cruelly seduced and giving birth to the illegitimate child of her wealthy employer's wayward grandson. Struggling for life after being taken down from the hanging scaffold, she lies conscious but immobile on the physician's table about to be dissected for medical discovery. Her tragic life cleverly unfolds through her thoughts and flashbacks, creating a compulsively readable story, all the more gripping for being based on reality.

http://www.maryhooper.co.uk

MICHELLE MAGORIAN

Just Henry

Egmont, 9781405227575

Henry's father died a war hero. He misses him enormously but finds escape from his new stepfamily in his frequent visits to the cinema. Forced to work on a school film project with a boy whose dad went AWOL and an illegitimate child isn't easy for Henry, but the trio make an extraordinary discovery and need to rely on each other to pull through. A vividly evoked portrait of postwar Britain and an involving mystery thriller about tolerance, friendship and coming to terms with who you are.

NICOLA MORGAN

The Highwayman's Curse KS4

Walker, 9781406303124

Well to do and wealthy, William has nevertheless had enough of his cruel, corrupt father and bullying brother and runs away… straight into the path of a highwayman, or rather his daughter, Bess, in disguise. The fierce, feisty and beautiful Bess shares her family's story and way of life with William. With a new danger over every page, William learns quickly to rely on himself and his wits, on the run from his family and the King's army, living rough on the bleak Yorkshire Dales stealing horses in order to survive. In this second story Will and Bess find themselves in Scotland, wrongfully accused of murder, captured by smugglers and desperate to break the cycle of religious distrust and persecution which has gripped the land for seventy years. Morgan's storytelling style is remarkable, sparing the reader none of the brutal hardship of life in an atmospheric tale flavoured with powerful and evocative Scottish dialect. It is at once gripping and gritty and stomach-churningly gruesome, retaining all of the doom and drama of the Noyes poem which inspired it.

http://www.nicolamorgan.co.uk

BEVERLEY NAIDOO

Burn My Heart

Puffin, 9780141321240

Set in 1950s Kenya, a violent and brutal time when the Mau Mau are trying to break free from British settlers, two boys from different backgrounds find their friendship torn apart by prejudice. Punchy, powerful and often painful to read, Naidoo's unique understanding of and passion for her subject shine through making this a moving and thought-provoking read.

PAMELA OLDFIELD

Workhouse (My Story) KS3

Scholastic, 9781407104805

Billed as a Victorian girl's diary from 1871, this is the latest in the hugely popular girls' section of the parallel *My Story* series. Girls can choose from Elizabethans, Egyptians and Edwardians, Tudors, Romans and the Blitz while dedicated boys' diaries cover Vikings, Romans and the World Wars. Now repackaged in stylish and sophisticated new covers.

CELIA REES

Sovay KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747592006

Discovering that her fiancé is cheating on her, the spirited and wilful Sovay adopts the disguise of a highway robber, of the kind who strike terror into the heart of travellers in 18th century England, as a test of her fiancé's love for her. She soon discovers no end of intrigues, corruptions and conspiracies both at home and in Revolutionary France in this strongly characterized, authentic and gripping adventure.

CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL

Scarper Jack and the Bloodstained Room

Puffin, 9780141322582

Scarper Jack, the chimney sweep's boy, overhears a murder being plotted while at work and sets out in the company of a street urchin and a little posh boy to track down the murderer. Richly detailed and cleverly plotted, this historical whodunit is a real pageturner.

MARJANE SATRAPI

Persepolis KS4

Vintage, 9780099523994

The stunningly evoked story of Marjane's childhood and growing up in Tehran during the Iran-Iraq war in graphic novel format. Satrapi cleverly illuminates the bigger political picture by focusing on the minutiae of her daily life, injecting it with a child's humour and insight. Part One ends with her moving on to a new life in the West away from the unrest while Part Two deals with her life in European higher education and return to Iran. Simple stylized black and white illustrations set off this sharply intelligent political commentary and intensely moving personal story to perfection.

TRACEY TURNER and SALLY KINDBERG

The Comic Strip History of the World

Bloomsbury, 9780747594314

From the Big Bang through the British Empire to the 21st century and beyond, this is a wonderful whistlestop tour of British history in comic book format.

MARKUS ZUSAK

The Book Thief ▸▸

Bodley Head, 9781862302914

Nazi Germany, 1939. Liesel steals a book carelessly left by the graveside of her brother. It is to be the first of several stolen from the mayor's library and from Nazi bookburnings, all taken at key moments in her growing up. From these stolen books her father teaches her to read and she begins to write down anecdotes about her own life, including the taking in of a Jew to keep him safe which turns her world upside down. These same anecdotes are later used by Death to narrate Liesel's life from 10 to 14. This is a brilliantly crafted and narrated story about life, love and the power of language in our lives. Intense and emotional it is not easily forgotten.

http://www.markuszusak.com

PLAY

ALAN DURANT

Doing the Double (Shades) KS3 AA

Evans, 9780237534479

Identical twins Dale and Joe hatch a risky plan to change places on the day of a crucial football match. Joe's not sure he wants to help but hates the thought of letting his twin down. This is an impressively scaled-down version of the original *Shades* title, an achievable read for those who find reading difficult.

http://www.alandurant.co.uk

ALAN DURANT and SUE MASON

Game Boy Reloaded (4u2read.ok) KS3 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842995662

In this sequel to *Game Boy,* Mia and Zak find an old game boy in a canal. This is no ordinary game boy though, this one pulls you inside the game. When Zak vanishes it is up to Mia to save him, in a thrilling touch and go adventure. She'll need all her gaming skills to get him out of this one. Written for younger teenagers with a reading age of less than 8 in short chapters with a comic book style illustration on almost every page.

http://www.alandurant.co.uk

ALAN DURANT and BRETT HUDSON

Stat Man AA

Barrington Stoke (fyi), 9781842995433

Arnie the football fan knows so much about football that all his friends call him the Stat Man, but just knowing about football doesn't guarantee he'll make the team for the cup final. One of a fantastic series of fiction mixed with facts for 10–14s with a reading age of 8.

http://www.alandurant.co.uk

HARRY EDGE

Spray

Hodder, 9780340956144

Five very different teenagers all have very different reasons for playing an assassination game but all are united in their desire to be the last player standing, taking out the targets one by one – except they never know when they might be a target too. Only the Gamekeeper has the winning hand and he has his own agenda. The author cleverly throws the readers right into the centre of the action in the online street war, as if they were starring in their own action movie. Attractively packaged enough to appeal to reluctant boys, the characters develop their own relationships through the game play giving this edgy new thriller lots of girl appeal too.

DAN FREEDMAN

Shoot to Win (Jamie Johnson) KS3

Scholastic, 9781407102948

Jamie lives for football so all his dreams come true when in this second book in the series, talent scouts from the top clubs are called to watch his school team play. But will the coach play fair or will Jamie miss his chance of fame? Perfect for coaxing younger football fans into books.

MICHAEL HARDCASTLE

My Brother's a Keeper (Graffix) KS3 AA

A & C Black, 9780713686289

When the football team's goalkeeper is out of action Carlo suggests his new stepbrother for the position, even though he doesn't always perform that well under pressure or when he's being watched. Will he hold it together for the final or has Carlo made a bad mistake? One of a series of strong stories in a comic strip format specially designed for resistant readers.

DAVID JAMES

Cup Final Day KS3 AA

Ransom, 9781841679600

One of an exciting new, five level, football-themed series to motivate and build reading stamina in those with low reading ages, this is a goal eye account of the FA Cup Final of 2008 at Wembley written by Portsmouth goalie David James.

RUNE MICHAELS

Genesis Alpha KS4

Simon & Schuster, 9781847381279

Josh wants to grow up to be just like his older brother Max. They're particularly close since Josh was a designer baby, born so his stem cells could save his brother's life. Both share a passion for game playing, particularly Genesis Alpha. Josh's life is shattered when Max is accused of a brutal murder and the dead girl's sister claims to be able to prove his guilt through their favourite game. What's worse is that if it hadn't been for Josh saving Max's life the murder would never have happened. Is he guilty too and how will he himself turn out? This emotional, intriguing and intelligent thriller explores complex ethics and issues at the cutting edge of science, the moral dilemmas and the nature of evil. It's compelling stuff.

GARTH NIX

Superior Saturday (Keys to the Kingdom) KS3

HarperCollins, 9780007175116

The sixth in the series, each taking its name from a day of the week, sees anti-hero Arthur Penhaligon's adventures becoming suddenly more challenging than ever as he finally encounters the evil sorceress.

Powerful enemies, terrifying new challenges and exuberant writing ensure this surreal, high energy fantasy adventure series retains its popularity. Perfect for computer games fans.

http://www.garthnix.co.uk

DAVID ORME

Formula One (Trailblazers) AA

Ransom Publishing, 9781841674285

A winning combination of fact and fiction for struggling readers, reading age 5–8. The highly visual first half of each book presents the facts clearly (all you need to know to become the number one racing driver). It cleverly introduces the carefully limited vocabulary needed for the story in the second half (the mystery man who manages to beat the fastest driver in the world). Each story is told using simple vocabulary on the left hand page while speech bubbles and captions further break down the action on the right. Ingenious – and it works!

MAL PEET

Exposure KS4

Walker, 9781406306491

Otello is a hugely talented footballer for a top South American team, a national hero, massively monied, married to the gorgeous pop star Desmerelda. When he signs a sensational club transfer deal he hits the headlines, but such exposure also leaves him open to other, more deadly accusations.

Football almost takes a backseat in this third book about the top sports journalist Faustino. Peet pushes out all the boundaries here, creating a breathtakingly clever updating of *Othello*, a cutting indictment of celebrity culture, football wealth and corruption, politics, homelessness and the power of the media to make and break reputations, but above all a compulsively readable story.

http://www.paulfaustino.com

BALI RAI

Dream On AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842991954

Baljit is mad about football and dreams of playing for Liverpool. His family make him work in his dad's chippy instead of going out to practice so when invited for professional trials he lies about where he's going. He wins his Liverpool place and now has to come clean to his parents. A realistic and readable story about prejudice, ambition, family tradition and friendship. Warmly written and witty it has a reading level of 8 and interest level of 12+.

http://www.balirai.co.uk

BALI RAI

Missing! (Soccer Squad) KS3

Red Fox, 9781862306554

The Reds are back. They were once the best football players in the school but now they're missing chances and penalties and look set to lose their place on the team unless they come up with a plan. Can a team building day help them head for the top? Fast-paced football action to kick start reading from an author who really understands how young people tick.

http://www.balirai.co.uk

ROBERT RIGBY

Living the Dream (Goal 2)

Corgi, 9780552554084

Having made it in UK Premier League football as a midfielder for Newcastle United, the hugely talented Santiago now signs for world-class dream-team Real Madrid, playing alongside Ronaldo, Beckham and Raul. European football and the Championship league is a whole different ball game though, with new pressures on and off the pitch; fighting all the time for a place in the squad, keeping your feet on the ground and staying loyal to your girlfriend back home. An exciting and involving sequel which conveys all the power and passion of the beautiful game while looking behind the glitz and glamour of the celebrity football lifestyle at the frustration and commitment needed to get to the top.

RICK RIORDAN

The Maze of Bones (The 39 Clues) KS3

Scholastic, 9780545060394

Grandma Grace chooses not to leave a will; instead each of her family can take a million dollars or follow clues on a quest to become the most powerful person in the world. Orphaned grandchildren Dan and Amy take the challenge and start gathering the 39 clues hidden around the world down through history. Readers can join in their quest by reading the ten books in the series, collecting the game cards, deciphering clues, codebreaking and acquiring skills online to win real life prizes. An involving, interactive, integrated multi-media adventure which will prove a winning combination and create new readers.

http://www.the39clues.com

http://www.rickriordan.com

DAVE SPURDENS

The Struggle for Success (Bridgewood High F.C.) KS3

Top That! Publishing/Quest, 9781846666971

Bridgewood High team got off to a good start but they're struggling now to make their mark on the Premier League. Have they really got what it takes to stick with it through the downs as well as the ups? An exciting new series from multi-platform publisher, Quest, which combines football action with the issues affecting the lives of the main characters and with an added extra in the form of a website which allows readers to track the progress of the team through the season with fixture reports, league tables and cup draws.

http://www.bridgewoodhighfc.com/

JONNY ZUCKER

Chase of Death (Rex Jones) KS3 AA

Badger Publishing, 9781844246052

Rex Jones is an action adventure superhero who stars in short, fast-paced thrillers for struggling readers, reading age 6½ to 7. In this outing, Rex finds himself driving in a real-life video game, not just to win but to save his life. Exciting enough to pull in the most reluctant reader with the lowest attention span. Also available in packs of six for guided reading.

JONNY ZUCKER

Skateboard Power (Dark Flight) KS3 AA

Badger Publishing, 9781844244874

A tense adventure which sees Nick's chances of winning the skateboarding competition ruined thanks to Dan the bully… unless he can find a way to get his own back. Similar in style and design to the other hi-lo Flight series from Badger, *Dark Flight* has particular boy appeal, skilfully catering for a lower reading age (6½ to 7) but higher interest range (10 to 14).

SPY

MICHAEL CARROLL

Absolute Power (New Heroes)

HarperCollins, 9780007210947

Once all the superheroes in the world were wiped out. Colin is still reeling from the shock of discovering his parents were part of those world famous superheroes. He is coming to terms with his own inherited superpowers and those of his best friends when the media pick up their story and force the teenagers into hiding in Sakkara, a strange place with secrets of its own. Deciding whether to use his powers for good or evil is vital, especially when confronted with the evil Victor Cross who in this latest in the series seems be acting very strangely indeed. Carroll's highly visual and spare writing style make this the perfect series for leading comic book fans into fiction.

ANDREW COPE and JAMES DE LA RUE

Superbrain (Spy Dog) KS3

Puffin, 9780141322445

Lara, the special agent dog bred and highly trained by the British Secret Service, is back on another dangerous mission. This time she's sniffing out a group of power-crazed Headteachers seeking the final ingredient for a secret formula which will make their school the best in the world. All they need is a child's brain. Can Lara save the day – and the child?

A wild and wacky spy story with hilariously witty illustrations to develop reading confidence and keep the pages turning.

JOE CRAIG

Power (Jimmy Coates)

HarperCollins, 9780007277308

The latest high-speed adventure sees Jimmy, part-boy part-genetically programmed killing machine still on the run from NJ7, who use him for their most terrifying government missions. This time his country is under attack, his government is out to get him and his own mysterious powers seem to be failing. Might time be running out for Jimmy and just how far will some people go for power?

Packed full of shocks and surprises, high-octane action sequences, constant dangers and nearmiss escapes from death, this is an at-a-sitting read for Bond and Rider fans everywhere. With bags of film potential this is by far the best Jimmy Coates yet.

http://www.joecraig.co.uk

http://www.jimmycoates.co.uk

STEPHEN DAVIES

The Yellowcake Conspiracy

Andersen Press, 9781842706749

Someone is trafficking yellowcake, the main ingredient in the production of nuclear bombs and the Director of the uranium mine in Niger is murdered. As spy in the service of the French government, 14-year-old Haroun must infiltrate and stop the yellowcake falling into enemy and deadly hands. Potentially complex themes; nuclear war, terrorism and globalization are brilliantly handled here in an exciting thrill-a-page adventure to keep kids hooked.

http://www.voiceinthedesert.org.uk

DAVID GILMAN

Ice Claw (Danger Zone)

Puffin, 9780141323039

A second heart-stopping adventure for Max Gordon who finds himself wanted for murder when he witnesses a mysterious Basque monk plummet to his death. As he falls he cries out a cryptic clue foretelling an ecological event set to kill millions in Europe. Desperate to clear his name, keep his freedom and save a continent, life has never been tougher for Max.

Death defying action scenes, a pacy narrative and spaghetti of plot twists ensure this adventure series stands out from the rest. Even Alex Rider is no match for Max as he fights environmental meltdown.

http://www.thedangerzone.co.uk

JULIA GOLDING

Empty Quarter KS3

Egmont, 9781405228190

Darcie Lock is sent on a Mediterranean cruise for spoilt little rich kids by her grandfather to spy on the President's wild child daughter. Caught up in a kidnap plot by Egyptian terrorists and left for dead in the desert, Darcie needs all her wit and ingenuity if she is to survive and rescue the kidnapped children. Double crossings, terrorists, kidnappings, ninjas, exotic locations, espionage and a feisty, formidable heroine from a prolific and versatile author.

http://www.juliagolding.co.uk

CAROL HEDGES

Dead Man Talking (Spy Girl) KS3

Usborne , 9780746078341

Aspiring spy girl Jazmin is back, this time holidaying in Venice with her mother, an MI6 secret agent, when she stumbles upon the missing link between trafficked antiques in the shady Venetian underworld and a body found hanging from London Bridge... With its futuristic setting and heroines who rely on their wits rather than a set of far-fetched, high-tech gadgets, this is a fast-paced jigsaw puzzle of a book which will have you racing through the pages to piece together the clues before Jaszmin. Nancy Drew for a new generation of readers and just as addictive.

JACK HIGGINS and JUSTIN RICHARDS

Death Run (Chance Twins) KS3

HarperCollins, 9780007257324

A holiday of a lifetime for the twins Rich and Jade is in fact an elaborate cover for their father's business as master spy for the British Government. The bad guys won't be defeated so easily and soon Rich is kidnapped too, leaving the twins to rely on their wits and ingenuity to escape.

The Chance Twins are a surefire hit with boys; pacy, unpredictable, precisely written with lots of detail they grip from first page to last and provide a perfect introduction to Higgins' adult thrillers.

CHARLIE HIGSON

By Royal Command (Young Bond) ▸▸

Puffin, 9780141322056

Although Bond junior claims he wants a quiet life he soon finds himself recovering in a Swiss clinic after saving the life of a friend, meeting royalty and being visited by the Russian secret service at school. Before you know it, young Bond is in the thick of a plot threatening King and country and deploying all his mental skill and tenacity to outwit his rivals as the threat of world war looms. Less gory than preceding books in the series and with a good deal of love interest, this is every bit as fast-paced and furious and a fabulous, edge of the seat introduction to the Fleming originals.

JILL MARSHALL

Spy in the Sky (Jane Blonde) KS3

Macmillan, 9780330458122

Always ready for action, girl genius and sensational spylet Jane Blonde is back for another incredible investigation. This time she's sky-diving but soon finds herself under attack by a flock of very strange creatures who try to force her back to earth. Bursting with gadgets, fast-paced action and coded messages, every young girl reader secretly wants to be Jane Blonde!

KIRSTEN MILLER

The Empress's Tomb (Kiki Strike) KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747589617

Who knew that underground from the sinkholes of New York City's streets lies a sinister underworld protected by a superspy – Kiki Strike – and her group of Irregulars? Now the girls are back to finish mapping the city, battle all kinds of evil, hunt out gangsters, track down the giant highly trained, deadly squirrels and hungry ghosts using their own special skills – but at what cost to their friendship? An intense and inventive, closely-knit action adventure with sophisticated packaging – Kiki Strike will soon have a real cult following.

http://www.kikistrike.com

ROBERT MUCHAMORE

The General (Cherub) KS4

Hodder, 9780340931844

Cherub adventure number 10 sees the child secret agents heading off to the deserts near Las Vegas to take part in the biggest and best war game ever against an entire American battalion. Muchamore creates characters who are so real they could almost be some of your friends, but they have grown up with each title in the series so the later books should be handled with care at KS3. Don't let that put you off, these are real winners in the boys' reading stakes; adrenaline-fuelled, all-action, absolutely compelling spy stories, the kind of books boys even force their friends to read.

http://www.cherubcampus.com

GARY MURRAY

Venom Rising (Global Intelligence Organisation)

Top That! Publishing/Quest, 9781846666018

Major Jack Strong is on a mission to stop an evil organization detonating a bomb and documents his findings in this book. The reader is tasked to work alongside him, using these notes to take over and complete the mission online, cracking codes and piecing clues together to save the world in an exciting new reading concept from multi-platform publisher, Quest.

http://www.venomrising.com

VARIOUS

Spies and Gadgets (Download) KS4 AA

Rising Stars, 9781846800481

One of a brilliant series guaranteed to motivate older boys with reading difficulties because of its up-to-the-minute, intrinsically interesting themes. Featuring a winning mix of illustrated short story and fact-packed, colour photo-filled, magazine-style information section this particular title reveals all about famous spies, the top spy gadgets and the best spy movies.

LEE WEATHERLY

Watcher KS4 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842994757

Although Sarah's mum walked out of her life seven years ago and wants nothing more to do with her she only lives a few miles away so Sarah can still see her. Sarah is watching and she's not prepared to let her mum get away with walking away. A sinister and moving psychological thriller crammed into only a few exciting pages for 13–16s, reading age 8.

E. L. YOUNG

The Viper Club (S.T.O.R.M.)

Macmillan, 9780330454162

Will Knight's amazing talent for inventing technogadgets leads to an invitation to join the secret organisation STORM, set up by a 14-year-old software billionaire whose other members are an astrophysicist and a chemistry genius with a talent for explosions. Here the teenagers uncover a crazy challenge set by the crime lord of the Shanghai underworld – to create three methods of undetectable murder for a $100 million dollar prize. It really is a matter of life or death this time. Original and exciting writing.

SURVIVE

STEVE BARLOW, STEVE SKIDMORE and SONIA LEONG

Save the Empire (I, Hero) KS3 AA

Franklin Watts, 9780749682651

The latest in an ingenious interactive adventure series where the reader takes the part of the hero and decides his destiny. Huge appeal for resistant readers who will appreciate the carefully regulated vocabulary and short paragraphs.

TIM BOWLER

Closing In (Blade) KS4

OUP, 9780192754851

In the second in this perfectly-pitched, streetwise series Becky has left her gang to be with Blade, but the pair are on the run now that the gang believe Blade and Becky are responsible for the death of their leader. Escape seems impossible given the gang rule especially with 3-year-old Jaz tagging along. Bowler has it spot on for teenagers who don't necessarily read by choice, offering short thrillers packed with action shown through the eyes of an arresting narrator. This is very real fiction with very real appeal from a crafty storyteller who never shortchanges in the storystakes.

http://www.timbowler.co.uk

CHAZ BRENCHLEY

The Lost World

Real Reads, 9781906230142

The classic story of a dangerous expedition perfectly presented for a new generation of readers; re-written and condensed into just 64 pages but remaining true to the plot, cleverly retaining the flavour of the original and attractively illustrated. Part of an inspired new series of best-loved classics covering Dickens, Austen, *Frankenstein*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Time Machine*.

ANDY BRIGGS

Virus Attack (hero.com)

OUP, 9780192755452

A deadly virus has been unleashed, powerful enough to bring down the Hero Foundation in this latest hero.com thriller. Read it alongside its antithesis title, Dark Hunter (villain.net) for maximum tension. Both this series and the anti-series explode with gadgets and extreme thrills and link to an interactive website with online mission trail for readers who have the chance to choose their allegiance; which side will you join?

http://www.whichsideareyouon.co.uk

http://www.andybriggs.co.uk

A. J. BUTCHER

The Tomorrow Seed (the Reaper Trilogy)

Atom, 9781904233961

The final part of this gripping futuristic trilogy set in a world where all over-18s have been wiped out by the Sickness. The teenagers have escaped alien captivity but now, back in their deserted homeland, they must struggle to make their own rules and relationships to ensure the creation of a new future full of hope for society. Action, explosive plotting and maximum tension make for an exciting adventure.

DEAN VINCENT CARTER

The Hunting Season KS4

Corgi, 9780552552981

An unexplained car robbed Geronius Moore of his parents, their bodies found mauled in the snow beside the wreckage. It has taken him eight years to recover but now bizarre things are happening around him and more people are dying. Macabre and menacing this is a gruesome and gory hunt for creatures of nightmares, a perfect pageturner for older readers.

http://www.deanvincentcarter.com

STEVE COLE

The Bloodline Cipher

Bloomsbury, 9780747593966

An elite team of teenage thieves, the Coldhardt Gang, are tasked to retrieve a magical book of the dead. They discover another more highly skilled, better informed gang led by Coldhart's longest rival have beaten them to it and also have a cunning plan to get rid of Coldhart himself. This is a far-fetched, fiendishly-twisty, high-octane thriller which hurtles along dropping false clues for the unsuspecting reader and crackling with pageturning suspense.

SAM ENTHOVEN

The Black Tattoo

Corgi, 9780552553582

Jack's day begins normally enough, eating Chinese in a London restaurant with his friend Charlie and Charlie's dad. The next minute both he and Charlie are confronting an odd and ancient brotherhood of demon fighters from the underworld. Mysterious tests, possession by demons, giant sprawling black tattoos, hell, vomiting bats and a superhero-like girl with Jackie Chan's martial arts skills follow, as Jack pursues his transformed friend on a journey through hell, battling black-clothed soldiers, bats and bloodthirsty monsters to rescue Charlie and thus save the world from evil. This is energetic, exciting writing with a compelling mix of horror and humour, fantasy and martial arts combining to make for an original and addictive read.

http://www.theblacktattoo.com

SANDRA GLOVER

Somewhere Else KS4

Andersen Press, 9781842708156

Jade insists she's really called Janet and lives in another time and place which really freaks out sister Zade who tries to blame it on a terrifying ordeal she's just undergone. Will she ever get her sister back? Glover excels at powerful page-turning psychological thrillers such as this.

WILLIAM GOLDMAN

The Princess Bride

Bloomsbury, 9780747590583

The beautiful Buttercup is to be married to Prince Humperdinck, too bad she's in love with Westley the farm boy. So far so fairytale but criminal masterminds, fencing wizards, giants, and villains of varying degrees of evilness abound in this good old-fashioned, very funny adventure story which formed the basis of the fantastically popular film of the same name. It is stunningly packaged here for a new generation of readers.

RICHARD HAMMOND

On the Edge: My Story KS4

Phoenix, 9780753824047

Basically an account of Richard Hammond's life both before and after the high profile crash in the jet-powered dragster which almost killed him, but also a fascinating insight into the influences that shaped him as a child, a behind the scenes look at the action and personalities of *Top Gear* and an astounding account of his recovery and reappearance on screen, told both from his point of view and, even more movingly, from that of his wife. This is a fascinating and remarkable story with wide appeal to really make you take stock of your own life.

J. A. HENDERSON

Bunker 10 KS4

OUP, 9780192754868

The gripping story of the last 24 hours of the 185 personnel and 7 children who were killed when the top secret Pinewood Military Installation exploded. False leads, shootings, time travel, DNA altering, explosions, a claustrophobically tight time frame – everything you need for an attention-stealing thriller.

JAMES JAUNCEY

The Reckoning KS4

Macmillan, 9780330454018

Fin's sister disappeared two years ago and now he longs for the time when he can escape from the ensuing problems at home himself. When he witnesses a girl fall from a bridge in the fog, hears the car doors and voices, Fin finds himself at the centre of a police murder hunt. As he sets out to discover if the girl fell or was pushed Fin uncovers uncomfortable secrets about his own sister and about the tight-knit community he grew up in. Part-mystery, part thriller, part exploration of terrorism, *The Reckoning* is a real heart-stopper.

http://www.jamesjauncey.com

SOPHIE McKENZIE

Blood Ties

Simon & Schuster, 9781847382757

Theo and Rachel both have their individual problems but are united in their determination to defeat the extremist group RAGE (the Righteous Army against Genetic Engineering) who launch an unprovoked attack on them at the school disco. Can they work fast enough to bring their attackers down? Why are they both such a target? What will they discover about their own identities in the course of their investigations in this incredibly pacy, intricately plotted, page-turning thriller about identity and cloning?

ANDY McNAB

Meltdown (Boy Soldier) ▸▸

Corgi, 9780552552240

In this latest thriller Danny and his ex-SAS grandfather undertake an undercover operation to hunt down those responsible for manufacturing Meltdown, a deadly drug threatening Europe. With its SAS technical jargon and shotgun delivery, explosive (literally!) action, complex plot twists and a thrill on every page this adrenaline-fuelled read is sure to be as fought over as others in the series.

http://www.randomhouse.co.uk/childrens/boysoldier/

JOSHUA MOWLL

Operation Storm City (Guild Trilogy)

Walker, 9781844286478

Becca and Doug are thrown into another nail-biting adventure where the stakes are higher than ever when they discover documents detailing their missing parents' expedition route and the position of the fabled city Ur-Can at their old family home. Can they reach Ur-Can in time to safeguard the security of the planet and be reunited with their parents?

More documentary and travelogue than novel, Mowll tells their story through an enticing mix of diary extracts, sketches, photos, maps, newspaper clippings, cross sections of ships and all kinds of other technical information and top secret fold-outs. Turning the reader into detective, this is the ideal read for Indiana Jones fans.

http://www.walkerbooks.co.uk/Joshua-Mowll

DAVID ORME

Boffin Boy and the Invaders from Space (Boffin Boy) AA

Ransom, 9781841676135

Rick Storm is an exceptionally clever, science-obsessed 14-year-old. After his father's death, Rick is determined to use his scientific skills to fight evil, here in the shape of invaders from space. A cleverly conceived manga style series of adventures designed for struggling readers age 9–14 with a reading age of 6–7. Future series will have a reading age 8–9 but good use of speech bubbles and the attractive manga artwork guarantees these books wider appeal, drawing the reader into the story.

http://www.boffinboy.com

JUSTIN RICHARDS

Rewind Assassin (Time Runners 2) KS3

Simon & Schuster, 9781416926436

When everyone suddenly starts behaving as if Jamie Grant isn't there he becomes a bit suspicious. With the friendly Anna's help he discovers that he doesn't exist and never has. He's fallen through a time break and actually lives in a parallel world where he has the power to control time even though he is outside it. As a Time Runner he is tasked with fixing the rips in time, stopping time and history falling apart. Not an easy task when the Spanish Armada has just resurfaced and you're trying to stop the assassination of William Shakespeare! A new twist on the time-travel adventure, gripping and imaginative.

http://www.time-runners.com

CHRIS RYAN

Twister (Code Red Adventures)

Red Fox, 9781862302822

A hurricane warning, a hijacked plane about to crash into an oil refinery and a violent tornado all add up to another all-action, highly realistic Code Red adventure for Ben Tracey.

CRAIG SIMPSON

Dogfight (Special Operations)

Corgi, 9780552556743

The next edge-of-the-seat episode in the adventures of Finn Gunnersen sees Finn and best friend Loki determined to join the Resistance passing on secret information to the British as the Germans invade their Norwegian village. They'll need every scrap of courage they can muster if they are to go through with their plans. The tension never lets up for a page in this exciting conspiracy thriller.

JOHN E. SMELCER

The Trap

Andersen Press, 9781842707395

Johnny's grandad sparks panic when he fails to return home from checking his trapline. Because of the clever alternating chapters only readers know he is stranded in the harsh Alaskan landscape with temperatures plummeting, surrounded by wild animals and with food supplies some meters away. It really is a race against time in this heart-stopping, edge of the seat survival story.

STEVE VOAKE

The Starlight Conspiracy KS4

Faber, 9780571233458

On the run from Social Services after the death of her traveller mother, Berry is handed a mysterious package with special powers by an old man she has never met. Pursued by terrorists and the FBI, Berry hotfoots it across the Atlantic determined to find the package's New Mexican owner and ensure the safety of the planet, although sometimes just dodging bullets and staying alive is problem enough. Part sci-fi thriller, part road trip, part conspiracy theory, part search to belong, this is an outstanding read.

THINK

DAVID ALMOND

Jackdaw Summer KS4

Hodder, 9780340881996

Liam and Max have played on the wild Northumbrian fells for years but this particular summer, guided by a jackdaw, they stumble across a baby abandoned in an old farm building. It is the summer they leave childhood behind for the baby changes their lives in unimaginable ways. Merging the real and the imaginary, making the ordinary extraordinary, Almond has spun another spellbinding story full of local flavour and universal truths about childhood and savagery, cruelty, goodness and growing up with every word earning its space on the page. Another winner.

http://www.davidalmond.com

BERNARD ASHLEY

Angel Boy

Frances Lincoln, 9781845078096

Bored, Leonard decides to run away for a few hours and takes a trip on the tro-tro bus. Getting off at a former prison for West African slaves he is kidnapped by a shadowy slave gang from the Ghanaian underworld who plan to use his angel face to beg for more money from the tourists on the streets. Ashley excels at tautly-plotted, timely and highly topical thrillers which pack a real emotional punch.

http://www.bashley.com

MALORIE BLACKMAN

Double Cross (Noughts and Crosses) KS4 ▸▸

Doubleday, 9780385615518

The fourth part in the sequence takes up Callie Rose's story as she fights for the equal and just society she craves following the death of her grandmother. Her boyfriend Tobey is determined to go to university and break free of the increasingly violent gang culture he grew up in. If only society made it that easy for both of them. Can they ever love each other enough to find their way through the obstacles? Immediate, emotional and utterly engrossing, this series just keeps on getting better and better.

http://www.malorieblackman.co.uk

TIM BOWLER

Bloodchild KS4

OUP, 9780192728715

Found lying in an alleyway after an accident, Will survives but is without his memory. Haunted by night visions, approached by hostile strangers and pursued by a small child with a story to share…the new Will senses a secret but struggles to discover the nature of the danger hiding in the town. Merging slowbuilding suspense with hints of the supernatural and a compelling plotline Bowler once more creates a spine-tingling psychological thriller shot through with important messages about fitting in and conforming to your peer group.

KEVIN BROOKS

Black Rabbit Summer KS4

Penguin, 9780141319117

Post-GCSEs a group of 5 friends meet up 'for old time's sake'. Theirs is a dark, shadowy, almost claustrophobic world, drink-fuelled and drug-blurred, meaning that no-one quite remembers how one of their group dies and another becomes police suspect number one.

'Issues' crowd in on every page to reflect teenage emotional turmoil, friendships shift and crack apart and the real 'adult' world suddenly looms ever more scary as the tension mounts and the hunt for the killer picks up pace. Brooks is writing at his best here; never passing judgement, allowing his older teenage readers to make up their own minds. Gritty, gripping, cleverly plotted crime.

MELVIN BURGESS

Sara's Face KS4

Puffin, 9780141316321

Sara Carter is desperate to be famous so when a legendary rock star comes along offering her training and cosmetic surgery it seems as if all her dreams have come true, but it soon becomes apparent that Jonathan's motives are more sinister than Sara could ever have imagined. Edgy, engrossing and guaranteed to make you think again about fame, celebrity and appearance. Another winner from an author not afraid to tell it like it is.

http://web.onetel.com/~melvinburgess/

ANNE CASSIDY

Forget Me Not KS4

Scholastic, 9780439942904

A child snatched from her bed in the middle of the night, an unknown abductor, a police investigation and some uncomfortable, long hidden family secrets about another missing toddler years previously form the basis for Cassidy's latest and most topical thriller yet, which hurtles along at an exhilarating pace. Definitely a book to keep you reading into the early hours.

http://www.annecassidy.com

YING CHANG COMPESTINE

Revolution Is Not A Dinner Party

Walker, 9781406315851

Eight-year-old Ling is a bright sparky character, born to two doctors, who enjoys a happy, privileged life until Comrade Li, Communist party officer, moves into their home. Neighbours disappear, her father is jailed, Ling herself is badly bullied at school for her bourgeois upbringing, food begins to run out and all her books are burned but still Ling refuses to give up hope, sustained by thoughts of her brave father. Readers will be riveted by this honest and insightful child's eye view of the Cultural Revolution in China.

FRANK COTTRELL BOYCE

Cosmic KS3

Macmillan, 9781405054645

Ostensibly a very funny story about an 11-year-old boy, Liam, who wins a competition to a top secret theme park and competes for the chance to orbit the moon in a rocket. It's also a wonderfully touching and profound story about lads and their dads, using World of Warcraft gaming levels to get the point across. Sounds surreal, but Cottrell Boyce excels at quirky, original stories which show life as a child sees it and it really really works here. You simply must read this book for yourself.

JACQUES COUVILLON

Chicken Dance KS3

Bloomsbury, 9780747589303

Winning a chicken-judging contest makes Don become a local celebrity overnight, the first good thing that's ever happened in his life, given that he's ignored at school and neglected at home. It also sets off a chain of events which turn his life upside down and make him question if he's really the person he thought he was at all. Quirky, funny, highly original, this is a wonderful mystery with a shocking twist in the tale.

http://www.jacquescouvillon.com

BERLIE DOHERTY

Abela KS3

Andersen Press, 9781842707258

Abela is sent to live in England as an illegal immigrant after the death of her mother from HIV/AIDS. Rosa is a young English girl whose parents want to adopt a child. This is the emotional, involving, often eye-opening story of how their two lives collide.

DEBORAH ELLIS

The Prison Runner

OUP, 9780192755483

With his parents in prison Diego makes a little bit of money running errands and doing homework for other kids. Desperate to make all their lives better after making a mistake in the prison he decides to go on a mystery mission with his friend, a mission which he is told will make him lots of money very quickly. Instead he finds himself pulled into the cocaine industry, badly bullied by the drugs lords. Diego is a small boy with a big heart which makes his exploitation by the drugs industry all the more poignant. Timely, topical and absolutely engrossing this is a horrific portrait of reality for so many of Bolivia's poor.

KEITH GRAY

Ostrich Boys KS4

Definitions, 9780099456575

Kenny, Sim and Black set off on an unusual and life-affirming journey from Cleethorpes to Scotland having stolen the urn containing the ashes of the their best friend, Ross, little suspecting how much Ross can still

affect all their lives even now he's dead. Gray delves deep inside the minds of his teenage protagonists to create a perfectly-plotted, powerful and poignant story about love, loss, grief and suicide. It is a brave book which will make you laugh and cry.

http://www.keith-gray.com

M. G. HARRIS

Invisible City (The Joshua Files)

Scholastic, 9781407104027

When Josh's father goes missing in an air crash in Mexico Josh suspects alien abduction. In fact his dad has been murdered and it's up to Josh to find an ancient prophecy foretelling the end of the world in this dark, scary and very very mysterious adventure packed full of conspiracy and intrigue. Wrapped in the coolest of covers, Josh's cleverly included blog entries pull readers in until they just can't help turning the pages.

http://www.themgharris.com

NICK HORNBY

Slam KS4

Penguin, 9780141321400

16-year-old Sam's life is looking more hopeful; first serious girlfriend, plans for college and celebrating his freedom from mum's latest 'rubbish boyfriend'. When his girlfriend announces she's expecting his baby, he takes a slam worse than any hard fall he's had while skateboarding. Sam turns to his skater hero Tony Hawk for advice and through their imagined conversations and bizarre glimpses into the future, Sam starts to grow up. Sam is a typical, straight-talking, very funny teenager who you want to see make a go of his life. This being Nick Hornby, there's a clever musical soundtrack playing along in the background, linking the characters and events together, adding another layer to the narrative as Sam starts to shoulder his responsibilities. Riveting stuff that both girls and boys will enjoy.

SIMMONE HOWELL

Notes from the Teenage Underground KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747585121

Edgy and alternative, this is the story of what happened the summer that three friends decided to go 'underground' in an extreme attempt at being different. Their film-making project, while ambitious in its scope turns out to be their undoing in this intelligent and honest look at friendships, family and fitting in.

DAMIAN KELLEHER

Life, Interrupted

Piccadilly Press, 9781848120037

When 14-year-old Luke's mum is taken ill at the hospital where she works as a nurse he is 'worried stupid', not to mention having to cope with his football mad little brother. But it isn't long before their lives really fall apart in this big-hearted story about facing the worst life can throw at you and surviving. Heartwarming and heartbreaking by turns, this is the kind of story which just won't let you go.

TOM KELLY

The Thing with Finn KS3

Macmillan, 9780330444552

Ten-year-old Danny is continually on the run from the memories haunting him after the death of his identical twin brother. A deeply moving and memorable but never sentimental story about life, love and death.

ALLY KENNEN

Berserk KS4

Marion Lloyd Books, 9780439943727

When a 15-year-old boy pretends to be his mum and writes to a prisoner on Death Row he unwittingly unleashes a nightmare, for that prisoner is unexpectedly released and attempts to track down Chas' mum. Chilling and thrilling by turns, this is a gripping story which keeps you guessing to the very last page.

http://www.allykennen.com

JOANNA KENRICK

Mindset KS3 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842995235

When the bombs go off they trigger a horrific hate-campaign against Shaleem, the only Muslim in the school, but will his best friend Mark have the courage to stand by him? A brilliant addition to the 'gr8 reads' series for 12–13s, reading age 7, and a timely and topical, racism-fighting story.

ELIZABETH LAIRD

Lost Riders

Macmillan, 9780330452090

Sold by his uncle in Pakistan to a stranger bearing promises of a new life, Rashid and Shari are soon separated, given new names and forced into work as camel jockeys in Dubai. Starved, beaten into working until they drop from exhaustion and often injured by blows from the horses' hooves the boys are desperate to find a way home despite Rashid's success on the track. Grounded in harsh, well-researched reality this is a gripping story of child slavery and trafficking, sympathetically told.

http://www.elizabethlaird.co.uk

PETER LANCETT

Gun Dog (Cutting Edge) KS4 AA

Ransom, 9781841677132

Set in a rough, rundown estate where gangs rule and the law lets down law-abiding citizens, Stevie finds his dreams of escape to a new life at university under threat when he agrees to hide a gun for a local ganglord.

Cutting Edge stories are short, gripping, gritty reads tackling tough issues for older teenagers who find reading a chore.

CATHERINE MacPHAIL

Under the Skin KS3 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842994535

Omar and his family have found a safe place to live at last but it's still not easy. Sam is always pushing him around at school and on his estate. One day it's different though and Omar starts fighting back. With a reading age of 8 this is a thought-provoking and relevant story about tolerance and difference by a first rate thriller writer which packs a huge amount into its 50 pages.

http://www.macphailbooks.com

HARRIET McBRYDE JOHNSON

Accidents of Nature KS4

Andersen Press, 9781842707418

Although Jean has cerebral palsy she's been brought up to feel the same as everyone else, but a ten day stay at a summer disability camp and the people she meets there make her question her beliefs. Highlighting clearly the changes in attitudes since the 1970s, this is a complex, thought-provoking story which deserves discussion.

PATRICIA McCORMICK

Sold KS4

Walker, 9781406313956

Lakshimi lives a simple life high on a mountain in Nepal, but is unknowingly sold into prostitution at the age of 13 by her family after a monsoon devastates their crops. Harrowing and unsettling reading which nevertheless highlights the shocking global scandal of sex slavery.

http://www.pattymccormick.com

ANTHONY McGOWAN

The Knife that Killed Me KS4

Definitions, 9781862306066

Paul could be a student at your school, a normal teenager fearing and hating the gangs and the bullies, but nevertheless caught in between, pressured by his peers into message-carrying, rivalries and ultimately knife crime. Tightly-written as a kind of flashback this is as chilling as it is compelling, hard-hitting but intelligent, tragic and, sadly, all too topical.

SALLY NICHOLLS

Ways to Live Forever

Marion Lloyd Books, 9781407105154

11-year-old Sam has acute leukaemia, but is determined to pack as much as he can into living and find out as much as he can about dying. This is his scrapbook full of Questions Nobody Will Answer, lists of ambitions he wants to fulfill before he dies, the random facts that fill his brain about UFOs and horror films and scientists and snippets showing how his family cope with his dying in their very different ways. Heartwarming rather than heartbreaking, this is an impressive debut novel you won't easily forget.

http://www.sallynicholls.com/ http://www.waystoliveforever.co.uk/

TABITHA SUZUMA

From Where I Stand KS4

Random House, 9780370329062

After witnessing his mother's death Raven is taken into foster care. He's badly bullied at school and feels his life and his head are unravelling. Lotte, a classmate bored with her ordinary friends, suggests hunting down his mum's killer and exacting revenge. This sparks a chain of events which have devastating consequences. An immensely moving, impossible to put down psychological thriller about mental health, which really gets inside the characters' heads. Suzuma shows not tells, making you feel what Raven feels but without ever sacrificing the fast pace or powerful plot.

http://www.tabithasuzuma.com

ROBERT SWINDELLS

Knife-Edge KS4 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842995419

Gangs rule Sam's estate, Cecil True's gang in particular. Driven by fear, Sam steals a knife – but will even that be enough to protect him? Up-to-the-minute, dramatic and all-too-believable, Swindells gets inside the minds of his characters and creates a snappy, discussion-starting story for struggling readers, reading age 8, interest level 13–16.

ELEANOR UPDALE

Saved KS4 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842995266

Luke and Anna belong to a cult which believes medicine and interfering with nature is evil, but their beliefs are put to the test when Luke is badly injured. Updale packs an amazing amount of emotion and drama into this very short, accessible story for 13–16s, reading age 8.

VALERIE ZENATTI

Message in a Bottle KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747590446

17-year-old peace campaigner, Tal, sends out a message in a bottle after narrowly escaping a horrifying suicide bomb attack in a café near her home. Her hope is to start a correspondence which will spark some understanding across the divide between Jerusalem, her home town, and Gaza despite the politics and history which separate them. The fascinating emails which fly between the seemingly ill-matched couple make up this startling novel, a novel about the people behind the news headlines, about the need for hope and about changing the world with a single action.

BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

Teacher's Dead KS4

Bloomsbury, 9780747586098

When a teacher is murdered by two of his students in school, Jackson is determined to find out just what happened and why. Edgy, straight-talking and immediately engaging Zephaniah tackles violence, bullying, family breakdown, the media and the justice system head on, challenging teenagers to think about their own prejudices and attitudes. Big issues, big impact and a brilliant book.

TRAIN

CHRIS BRADFORD

The Way of the Warrior (Young Samurai)

Puffin, 9780141324302

Shipwrecked off the Japanese coast in 1611, his father killed by ninja pirates, 11-year-old Jack is rescued by a Samurai. As a gaijin, or foreigner, Jack is absolutely on his own, unable to understand the culture or language and having to prove himself to both his new master and his classmates. Vividly detailed, hold-your-breath tense and action-packed this is a stunning evocation of Japan and an exciting martial arts adventure boys will be gripped by to the very full stop.

http://www.chrisbradford.co.uk/

LIBBA BRAY

The Sweet Far Thing KS4

Simon & Shuster, 9781847383266

The stunning conclusion of the Gothic trilogy starring 16-year-old Gemma, shipped off to a strict boarding school from India after the death of her mother. Dark magic, mycticism, mystery and true love collide with straight-laced Victorian morality in this addictive and unusual story.

KATE BRIAN

Legacy (Private) KS4

Simon & Schuster, 9781847382627

The latest in the high-octane school series for girls. Secrets and lies, dramas and intrigue, gossip and glamour, murders and suicides, friendships and falling out, not to mention lots of regular retail therapy – it all happens at the exclusive Easton Academy!

GENNIFER CHOLDENKO

If A Tree Falls at Lunchbreak

Bloomsbury, 9780747589273

Kirsten has just been abandoned by her best friend but refuses to join the cool clique. She teams up with new boy to the school, Walk, and despite the obvious differences in their backgrounds, discovers they have much in common and can help each other more than she'd dreamed. Although this is a serious story about bullying, family break up, fitting in and racism it is hopeful rather than depressing with the same light tone and magical feel as Jerry Spinelli.

EVA IBBOTSON

The Dragonfly Pool

Macmillan, 9780330456357

When war breaks out the high-spirited, independent-minded Tally is sent off to boarding school in deepest Devon very much against her will. Far from being the dull, dreary place she imagines, Delderton Hall is extraordinary and completely unconventional place with eccentric staff and interesting pupils. On a trip to the kingdom of Bergania, Tally meets up with a prince who sweeps her off on an exciting, highly dangerous adventure which tests her to the limit. Storytelling at its very, very best.

MASASHI KISHIMOTO

Naruto v.32

Viz Media, 9781421519449

Naruto is an attention-seeking, mischief-making teenage ninja in training determined to be the greatest ninja in his village. While he's deadly serious in his ambition he has a highly developed sense of fun too. In the latest installment of the long-running series, team Kakashi do battle with a spy in their midst. Highly addictive reading for boys and girls, Naruto has fast become a whole industry of books, anime, films, games and trading cards.

SARA LAWRENCE

High Jinx KS4

Faber, 9780571236701

Prepare for all kinds of shenanigans at England's most exclusive boarding school for girls, a sort of 21st century Malory Towers, set on Brighton's cliff tops. School takes a back seat though for Jinx and Latiffe for whom the only subject on the curriculum is girls behaving badly, often very badly. Read this one yourself before putting it in your library, it's not for every school!

BALI RAI

Are You Kidding? KS4 AA

Barrington Stoke, 9781842995402

Set in the same school as *Two Timer* and *Revenge of the Number Two*, this is the final part of the series in which the goat which previously wandered the school corridors, Flossie, mysteriously disappears. Her disappearance coincides with the appointment of a new caretaker who just happens to be Marcus' granddad. Will Marcus be able to save his gramps – or the goat? A very silly, very funny, slightly gross read to convert those who find reading a struggle.

CARMEN REID

New Girl (Secrets at St Jude's) KS4

Corgi, 9780552557061

LA 'It' girl Gina has overstepped the mark this time – too much clothes shopping, IM-ing and staying out late together with one pool party too many meant her mum packed her off to the boarding school she attended as a child in... Scotland. There the boring teachers, horrible showers, hockey matches and school dinners are as far removed from LA as you can possibly imagine. Somehow Gina has to survive. Lucky then she has her crazy new dorm friends and the boys from the school next door to help her through it.

Enid Blyton's *Malory Towers* for the new millennium and just as addictive.

JUSTIN SOMPER

Blood Captain (Vampirates)

Simon & Schuster, 9781416901020

Orphaned twins Conor and Grace took to a life of piracy after a shipwreck, Conor on a pirate ship and Grace with the vampirates. In this the third book in the series the pair continue on their separate paths but danger comes in new forms, more evil and more terrifying than ever before...

Set five hundred years in the future this is a breathtakingly original twist on the currently fashionable pirate theme with a swashbuckling start, an exciting finale and many deadly duels and bloody battles in between. Pacy action, short chapters and plenty of edge of the seat cliffhanger chapter endings make the whole series hugely readable. This third imaginative installment has more danger and more spectacular action than ever before, a new evil villain and a vampirate guru.

http://www.vampirates.co.uk

ALI SPARKES

Stirring the Storm (The Shapeshifter) KS3

OUP, 9780192754691

Just when he has become used to his new life as a shapeshifter Dax's life is thrown into chaos. He has reason to believe that those supposedly protecting him might actually be out to get him and all the other Children of Limitless Ability. Just what are their motives? Can he save his friends? How did they get such amazing shapeshifting powers?

Intrigue, conspiracy and excitement build to an unguessable conclusion to this thrilling set of adventures.

http://www.alisparkes.com/

TRENTON LEE STEWART

The Mysterious Benedict Society KS3

Chicken House, 9781905294572

Four incredibly gifted children looking for special opportunities are all thrown together by chance after answering a mysterious newspaper ad. All are orphans and after a series of brain-boggling tests find themselves enrolled in The Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, under the authority of the eccentric Mr Benedict on a dangerous secret mission to infiltrate The Institute for orphans run by the wickedly evil Mr Curtain.

Not for nothing did this cleverly crafted story about family, love, loyalty and the importance of working together take the US by storm with its twisty turny plot, plentiful humour, endearing and highly individual characters and plethora of mindbending logic puzzles and challenges which test the reader as much as the characters themselves. You'll be hooked!

http://www.mysteriousbenedictsociety.com/

CECILY von ZIEGESAR

Unforgettable (It Girl) KS4

Headline, 9780755346684

Since her arrival at Waverly Academy, Jenny has always set out to make an impression and give everyone lots to talk about. This fourth in the series sees the girls start to overcome old enmities with the formation of the Women of Waverly club with some seriously exciting discussion topics on their agenda. It surely won't be long before the gossip starts flying again!

Featuring the most popular characters from the much talked about Gossip Girls series this is sure to be popular.

MARK WALDEN

Escape Velocity (HIVE – Higher Institute of Villainous Education)

Bloomsbury, 9780747594857

HIVE is a high-tech Hogwarts, a top secret school of advanced villainy where students are trained for six years to become criminal masterminds. In this episode the Headteacher, Nero, is kidnapped and Otto, HIVE's star super-villain student, must use all his criminal cunning to crack MI6 and locate the Head's whereabouts – once he has managed to escape HIVE itself of course.

A fast-paced and vividly drawn thriller with plenty of computer interfacing and a stunningly designed accompanying website which has a deservedly huge and growing fanbase.

http://www.bloomsbury.com/HIVE/

Appendices

Read On…

Other writers for young adults

Douglas Adams – comedy sci-fi
Chimamana Ngozi Adichie – multicultural/world
Cecilia Aherne – relationships
Monica Ali – multicultural/world
Emily Barr– relationships
Terry Brooks – fantasy
Bill Bryson – travel/humour
Trudi Canavan – fantasy
Bernard Cornwell – historical fiction
David Eddings – fantasy
Ben Elton – comedy/satire
Janet Evanovich – crime fighting
Jasper Fforde – comedy fiction
Dave Gorman– comedy
Philippa Gregory – historical fiction
Robert Harris– thrillers
Nick Hornby – boy stuff
Khaled Hosseini – multicultural/world
Conn Iggulden – historical fiction
Sophie Kinsella – chicklit
Dorothy Koomson – relationships
Andy McNab– thrillers
Haruki Murakami – magical realist
Jodi Picoult – relationships/issues
Terry Pratchett – comic fantasy
Ian Rankin– crime
Chris Ryan– thrillers
Alice Sebold – real life
Meera Syal – multicultural/world
Danny Wallace – comedy/satire
Irvine Welsh – gritty real-life
Adeline Yen Mah – multicultural/world

Keeping them reading
Some general websites for adults and children

For Adults

ACHUKA	www.achuka.co.uk
Book Bars	www.bookbars.co.uk
Books for Keeps	www.booksforkeeps.co.uk
Children's Laureate	www.childrenslaureate.org
Children's Literature Web Guide	www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown
CILIP Carnegie and Greenaway Awards	www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk
Contact an Author	www.contactanauthor.co.uk
Literacy Trust	www.literacytrust.org.uk/Campaign/Champions/index.html
Northern Children's Book Festival	www.ncbf.org.uk
Readathon	www.readathon.org
Reading Agency	www.readingagency.org.uk
Reading Connects	www.readingconnects.org.uk
Reading Zone	www.readingzone.com
UK Children's Books	www.ukchildrensbooks.co.uk
World Book Day	www.worldbookday.com

For Children (and adults too!)

4uReaders.net	www.4ureaders.net
Betty Bookmark	www.bettybookmark.com
The Bookbag	www.thebookbag.co.uk
Bookbox	www.channel4.com/bookbox
Bookheads	www.bookheads.org.uk
Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards	www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk
Children's Authors TV	www.childrensauthors.tv
Children's Book Sequels	www.childrensbooksequels.co.uk
Children's Poetry Bookshelf	www.childrenspoetrybookshelf.co.uk
Comic Book Resources	www.comicbookresources.com
Cool Reads (now archived)	www.cool-reads.co.uk
EnCompass Culture (British Council)	www.encompassculture.com
Great Books to Read Aloud	www.greatbookstoreadaloud.co.uk
International Children's Digital Library	www.icdlbooks.org
Just for Kids who love books	www.alanbrown.com
Kids' Review	www.kidsreview.org.uk
Love Reading 4 Kids	wwwlovereading4kids.co.uk
Mrs Mad's Book-a-Rama	www.mrsmad.com
Reading Matters	www.readingmatters.co.uk
Stories from the Web	www.storiesfromtheweb.org
Teen Reads	www.teenreads.com
Turn to Page 1	www.turn2page1.com

For teenagers (and adults too)

Chicklish	http://keris.typepad.com/chicklet/
The B Word	http://www.the-b-word.co.uk/
Spinebreakers	http://www.spinebreakers.co.uk
Groupthing	http://groupthing.org
Teen Today	http://www.teentoday.co.uk/articles/category/books/
Inside a Dog	http://www.insideadog.com.au/
Reading Rants	http://www.readingrants.org/
Teen Ink	http://teenink.com/Books/
Love Reading	http://www.lovereading.co.uk/newgeneration
Teens Read Too	http://www.teensreadtoo.com/BookReviews.html

Blogs

Read Plus	http://www.readplus.co.uk/blog.php
About Books for Teens	http://aboutbooksforteens.blogspot.com/
Reader Rabbit	http://readerrabbit.blogspot.com/
The Book Muncher	http://thebookmuncher.blogspot.com/
So Little Time for Books	http://solittletimeforbooks.blogspot.com/
Teen Fiction Café	http://www.teenfictioncafe.blogspot.com/
Teen Librarian	http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/
VVM Book Blog	http://vvmsmedia.edublogs.org/
YA Books Central	http://yabookscentral.blogspot.com/
Book Leads	http://bookleads.wikispaces.com/

Author index

Abdel-Fattah, Randa 53
Abrahams, Peter 60
Agard, John 30
Almond, David 30, 89
Ardagh, Philip 26
Ash, Russell 26
Ashley, Bernard 89
Barker, Dominic 65
Barlow, Steve 84
Barratt, Mark 69
Bateman, Colin 38
Beastly Boys, The 33
Becker, Tom 42
Black, Holly 34, 53
Blackman, Malorie 42, 89
Blade, Adam 30
Bosch, Pseudonymous 33
Bowler, Tim 84, 89
Bradford, Chris 96
Bray, Libba 96
Brenchley, Chaz 84
Breslin, Theresa 69
Brian, Kate 96
Briggs, Andy 84
Brittney, L. 50
Brontë, Charlotte 42
Brooks, Kevin 90
Bryson, Bill 26
Buckley-Archer, Linda 69
Bugler, Suzanne 53
Burgess, Melvin 90
Butcher, A. J. 85
Cabot, Meg 53
Canavan, Trudi 33
Cann, Kate 54
Carroll, Michael 79
Carter, Dean Vincent 85
Cassidy, Anne 54, 60, 90
Cavendish, Grace 70
Caveney, Philip 50, 65
Cheshire, Simon 60
Choldenko, Gennifer 96
Clayton, Emma 38
Cole, Steve 85
Colfer, Eoin 50, 60, 61
Compestine, Ying Chang 90
Cope, Andrew 79
Cottrell Boyce, Frank 91
Couvillon, Jacques 91
Craig, Joe 79
Dann, Jack 31
Davies, Stephen 79
Day, Susie 54
de la Rue, James 79
Deary, Terry 31
De Mari, Silvana 34
Dent, Grace 54
Dessen, Sarah 54
Diamand, Emily 38
diTerlizzi, Tony 34
Docherty, Jimmy 65
Doder, Joshua 61
Dogar, Sharon 55
Doherty, Berlie 91
Donkin, Andrew 60
Downham, Jenny 55
Dozois, Gardner 31
Dryburgh, Nicole 55
Dunbar, Fiona 55
Durant, Alan 74
Duval, Alex 42
Edge, Harry 74
Ellis, Deborah 91
Enthoven, Sam 85
Ewart, Franzeska G. 50
Fletcher, Charlie 34
Freedman, Dan 75
Freer, Echo 55
French, Vivian 34
Funke, Cornelia 34
Gaiman, Neil 34, 43
Gardner, Sally 70
Gavin, Jamila 61
Gibbons, Alan 43
Gibbons, Dave 62
Gifford, Clive 65
Gilman, David 80
Gleitzman, Morris 70
Glover, Sandra 86
Godbersen, Anna 56
Golding, Julia 51, 80
Goldman, William 86
Gray, Keith 91
Grogan, John 47
Guinness 27
Hale, Dean 31
Hale, Nathan 31
Hale, Shannon 31
Hammond, Richard 86
Hannah, Sophie 31
Hardcastle, Michael 75
Harris, Joanne 70
Harris, M. G. 92
Hawes, Alison 47
Hawking, Lucy 31
Hawking, Stephen 31
Hearn, Lian 51
Hedges, Carol 80
Hegley, John 31, 32
Henderson, J. A. 86
Higgins, Chris 56
Higgins, F. E. 35
Higgins, Jack 81
Higson, Charlie 81
Hill, Dave 63
Hill, Stuart 35
Hooper, Mary 71
Hornby, Nick 92
Horne, Richard 27
Horowitz, Anthony 44, 61
Howell, Simmone 92
Hudson, Brett 74
Hunter, Norman 66
Hurley, Tonya 56
Ibbotson, Eva 97
Jacques, Brian 47
James, David 75
Jarvis, Robin 47
Jauncey, James 86
Johnson, Harriet McBryde 94
Keaney, Brian 35
Kelleher, Damian 92
Kelly, Tom 93
Kennen, Ally 93
Kenrick, Joanna 56
Kenrick, Joanna 93
Kibuishi, Kazu 35
Kindberg, Sally 73
King, Karen 62
Kinney, Jeff 66
Kishimoto, Masashi 97
Kitamura, Satoshi 30
Koertge, Ron 48
Koll, Hilary 32
Kuipers, Alice 57
Laird, Elizabeth 93
Lanagan, Margo 32
Lancett, Peter 44, 93
Landy, Derek 44
Lawrence, Michael 66
Lawrence, Sara 97
Le Guin, Ursula 36
Le Vann, Kate 57

Author index

Lee, Ingrid 48
Lees, Amanda 57
Lennon, Joan 36
Leong, Sonia 84
Leslie, Jeremy 27
Limb, Sue 58
Lloyd, John 27
Lloyd, Saci 38
MacDonald, Fiona 45
MacPhail, Catherine 62, 94
Magorian, Michelle 71
Malley, Gemma 39
Marks, Graham 39
Marr, Melissa 58
Marshall, Jill 81
Mason, Sue 74
McCormick, Patricia 94
McGann, Oisin 39
McGowan, Anthony 94
McKay, Hilary 66
McKean, Dave 30, 34
McKenzie, Sophie 87
McMahon, Jennifer 62
McNab, Andy 87
McNish, Cliff 45
Meyer, Stephenie 45
Michaels, Rune 75
Miller, Kirsten 81
Mills, Steve 32
Moore, Alan 62
Morgan, Nicola 27, 71
Morpurgo, Michael 48
Mowll, Joshua 87
Muchamore, Robert 82
Murphy, Glenn 28
Murray, Gary 82
Nadin, Joanna 58
Naidoo, Beverley 72
Ness, Patrick 39
Nicholls, Sally 94
Nicholson, William 40
Nix, Garth 36, 75
Ogilvy, Ian 67
O'Hare, Mick 28
Oldfield, Pamela 72
Orme, David 40, 76, 87
Owen, James A. 51
Page, Simon 67
Pagliarulo, Antonio 63
Palmer, Tom 63
Paolini, Christopher 36
Patterson, James 40
Paver, Michelle 48
Payne, Jan 28
Peet, Mal 76
Pfeffer, Susan 40
Phillips, Mike 28
Phillips, Suzanne 63
Pilkey, Dav 67
Plaja, Luisa 58
Porter, Henry 63
Porter, Richard 28
Poskitt, Kjartan 67
Price, Susan 41
Priestley, Chris 45
Pullman, Philip 37
Rai, Bali 76, 97
Rees, Celia 72
Reeve, Philip 51, 52
Reid, Carmen 98
Rettig, Liz 58
Richards, Justin 81, 88
Riddell, Chris 37, 64
Rigby, Robert 77
Riordan, Rick 37, 77
Ripley, Robert le Roy 28
Roberts, David 45
Rose, Malcolm 48, 63
Russell, Christopher 72
Ryan, Chris 88
Sage, Angie 52
Satrapi, Marjane 72
Sedgwick, Marcus 52
Shea, Alan 37
Shusterman, Neal 41
Simpson, Craig 88
Skelton, Matthew 52
Skidmore, Steve 84
Smelcer, John E. 88
Somper, Justin 98
Sparkes, Ali 98
Spurdens, Dave 77
Stanton, Andy 68
Stewart, Paul 37, 64
Stewart, Trenton Lee 99
Stoker, Bram 45
Stone, Tanya Lee 57
St John, Lauren 49
Strong, Jeremy 68
Suzuma, Tabitha 95
Swindells, Robert 95
Symons, Mitchell 29
Takaya, Natsuki 59
Toksvig, Sandi 59
Turner, Tracey 73
Updale, Eleanor 95
Valentine, Jenny 64
Various 29, 59, 82
Voake, Steve 88
von Ziegesar, Cecily 99
Walden, Mark 99
Wallace, Danny 68
Walliams, David 68
Warner, Mark 67
Waters, Daniel 46
We Are What We Do 29
Weatherly, Lee 82
Webb, Catherine 64
Westerfeld, Scott 41
Wharton, Thomas 49
Wray, Sarah 46
Young, E. L. 83
Zenatti, Valerie 95
Zephaniah, Benjamin 32, 95
Zevin, Gabrielle 59
Zucker, Jonny 41, 77, 78
Zusak, Markus 73

Title index

101 Things You Wish You'd Invented 29
Abela 91
Absolute Power (New Heroes) 79
Accidents of Nature 94
Airhead 53
Airman 50
Amazing Mind of Alice Makin, The 37
Angel Boy 89
Animal Lab (Shades) 49
Are You Kidding? 97
Artemis Fowl: The Graphic Novel 60
Awesome Animals (First Flight) 47
Babyfather 56
Bad Boy Can be Good for a Girl, A 57
Bag of Bones, The (Tales from the Five Kingdoms) 34
Before I Die 55
Behind the Scenes: Fashion (Download) 59
Berserk 93
Big Book of Top Gear, The 28
Big Woo! 54
Bima and the Water of Life 50
Black Rabbit Summer 90
Black Tattoo, The 85
Blood Captain (Vampirates) 98
Blood Ties 87
Bloodchild 89
Bloodline Cipher, The 85
Blue Gene Baby (Silk Sisters) 55
Boffin Boy and the Invaders from Space 87
Bone Magician, The 35
Bone Room, The 60
Book of General Ignorance, The 27
Book Thief, The 73
Born to Run 48
Boy in the Dress, The 68
Boy Who Set Sail on a Questionable Quest, The (Blart 3) 65
Breaking Dawn (Twilight Saga) 45
Breathe 45
Brisingr 36
Broken Soup 64
Bunker 10 86
Burn 63
Burn My Heart 72
By Royal Command (Young Bond) 81
Cannibal City (Titanic 2020) 38
Captain Underpants and the Preposterous Plight of the Purple Potty People 67
Carbon Diaries 2015, The 38
Castle (The Seventh Tower) 36
Chase of Death (Rex Jones) 77
Chicken Dance 91
Chimera's Curse, The (Companions Quartet 4) 51
Closing In (Blade) 84
Comic Strip History of the World, The 73
Coraline: The Graphic Novel 43
Cosmic 91
Counting on Leroy (fyi) 32
Cup Final Day 75
Dark Alchemy 31
Dark Realm, The: Skor the Winged Stallion 30
Dead and the Gone, The 40
Dead Man Talking (Spy Girl) 80
Death Run (Chance Twins) 81
Diary of a Wimpy Kid 66
Do Not Open 29
Do Polar Bears Get Lonely? 28
Dog Lost 48
Dogfight (Special Operations) 88
Dognapped! (Amy Carter Mysteries) 62
Doing the Double (Shades) 74
Doomsday Machine, The (Horatio Lyle) 64
Double Cross (Noughts and Crosses) 89
Dracula 45
Dragonfly Pool, The 97
Dream On 76
Dying for the Dark (Dark Man) 44
Empress's Tomb, The (Kiki Strike) 81
Empty Quarter 80
Endymion Spring 52
Escape Velocity (HIVE) 99
Evil Brain Chips (Full Flight 5) 41
Exposure 76
Extras 41
Eye of the Serpent, The (Alec Devlin) 50
Final Warning, The (Maximum Ride) 40
Forever Rose (Casson Family) 66
Forget Me Not 90
Formula One (Trailblazers) 76
Foul Play (Football Detective) 63
From Where I Stand 95
Fruits Basket v21 59
Gallowglass, The (Dr Sigmundus) 35
Game Boy Reloaded 74
General, The (Cherub) 82
Generation Dead 46
Genesis Alpha 75
George's Secret Key to the Universe 31
Ghostgirl 56
Giant Problem, A (Beyond the Spiderwick Chronicles) 33
Ginger Snaps 54
Girls are Best 59

Graveyard Book, The 43
Greek who Stole Christmas, The (Diamond Brothers) 61
Grk Smells a Rat 61
Guinness World Records 2009 27
Gun Dog (Cutting Edge) 93
Half Moon Investigations 61
Hangman's Lair and Other Case Files, The (Saxby Smart: Private Detective) 60
Haunted (Lady Grace Mysteries) 70
Heaven's Net is Wide (Tales of the Otori) 51
Here Lies Arthur 51
High Jinx 97
High Lord, The (Black Magician Trilogy) 33
High Rhulain (Redwall) 47
Highwayman's Curse, The 71
How Loud Can You Burp? 28
How Much Poo Does an Elephant Do? 29
Hunted (Vampire Beach) 42
Hunting Season, The 85
Ice Claw (Danger Zone) 80
Ice-Cream Con, The 65
If A Tree Falls at Lunchbreak 94
In the Club (Celebutantes) 63
Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm, The 66
Inkdeath 34
Into the Dark (Echo Falls Mystery) 60
Invisible City (The Joshua Files) 92
Ironside 53
It All Went Horribly Wrong 67
Jackdaw Summer 89
Jane Eyre 42
Jango (Noble Warriors) 40
Joe Rat 69
Jumping to Confusions 58
Just Henry 71
Kid Swap (Jiggy McCue) 66
Kiss of Death, The 52
Knife of Never Letting Go, The (Chaos Walking) 39
Knife that Killed Me, The 94
Knife-Edge 95
Know Your Brain 27
Kumari: Goddess of Destiny (Kumari Trilogy) 57
Last Battle of the Icemark (The Icemark Chronicles) 35
Last Elf, The 34
Last Leopard, The 49
Legacy (Private) 96
Legion of the Dead (Barnaby Grimes) 64
Life on the Refrigerator Door 57
Life, Interrupted 92
Living the Dream (Goal 2) 77
Lost Barkscrolls, The (The Edge Chronicles) 37
Lost Riders 93
Lost World, The 84
Luxe, The 56
Magenta Sings the Blues (Magenta Orange) 55
Marley 47
Master of the Fallen Chairs, The (The House of Skirl) 63
Maze of Bones, The (The 39 Clues) 77
Measle and the Doompit (Measle Stubbs) 67
Medici Seal, The 69
Meet Me at the Boathouse 53
Meltdown (Boy Soldier) 87
Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac 59
Message in a Bottle 95
Mindset 93
Mirrormask 34
Missing! (Soccer Squad) 76
Mothstorm (Larklight) 52
Mr Gum and the Dancing Bear 68
My Brother's a Keeper (Graffix) 75
My Dog is a Carrot 32
My So-Called Life 58
Mysterious Benedict Society, The 99
Mystifying: Sinister Stories of the Unexplained 30
Name of this Book is Secret, The 33
Naruto v.32 97
Necropolis (Power of Five) 44
New Girl (Secrets at St Jude's) 98
Newes from the Dead 71
Nighttrap (Darkside) 42
Northern Lights (His Dark Materials) 36
Nostradamus Prophecy, The 69
Notes from the Teenage Underground 92
Oath Breaker (Chronicles of Ancient Darkness) 48
Odin's Son (Odin Trilogy) 41
Omega Place 39
On the Edge: My Story 86
Once 70
Operation Storm City (Guild Trilogy) 87
Ostrich Boys 91
Percy Jackson and the Battle of the Labyrinth 37
Perfect Ten, A 56
Persepolis 72
Philip Ardagh's Book of Absolutely Useless Lists 26
Pick Me Up Put Me Down 27
Playing with Fire (Skulduggery Pleasant) 44
Possessing Rayne 54
Power (Jimmy Coates) 79
Powers (Annals of the Western Shore) 36
Prince of Pirates (Sebastian Darke) 65
Princess Bride, The 86
Prison Runner, The 91
Promise Not to Tell 62
Queste (Septimus Heap) 52
Questors 36
Rain 57

Rapunzel's Revenge 31
Really Short History of Nearly Everything, A 26
Reavers' Ransom 38
Reckoning, The 86
Red Necklace, The 70
Red Spikes 32
Resistance, The 39
Revolution Is Not A Dinner Party 90
Rewind Assassin (Time Runners 2) 88
Ride of Death (Nemesis 4) 62
Ripley's Believe It Or Not 2009 28
Roar, The 38
Robber Baron's Daughter, The 61
Ropes, The: Poems To Hold On To 31
Runemarks 70
Sara's Face 90
Savage, The 30
Save the Empire (I, Hero) 84
Saved 95
Scared to Death (Hell's Underground) 43
Scarper Jack and the Bloodstained Room 72
Scene of the Crime 63
Search for the Red Dragon (Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica) 51
Shadow of Malabron, The (Perilous Realms) 49
Shadow of the Gallows (Horrible Histories Gory Stories) 31
Shiraz BW: The Ibiza Diaries (Diary of a Chav) 54
Shoot to Win (Jamie Johnson) 75
Silvertongue 34
Skateboard Power (Dark Flight) 78
Slam 92
Small-Minded Giants 39
So You Think You Know the Simpsons? 65
Sold 94
Somewhere Else 86
Sovay 72
Space Plague (Full Flight 5) 40
Spies and Gadgets (Download) 82
Split by a Kiss 58
Spray 74
Spy in the Sky (Jane Blonde) 81
Starlight Conspiracy, The 88
Stat Man 74
Stirring the Storm (The Shapeshifter) 98
Stonekeeper, The (Amulet) 35
Strays 48
Struggle for Success, The (Bridgewood High F.C.) 77
Stuff of Nightmares, The 42
Superbrain (Spy Dog) 79
Superior Saturday (Keys to the Kingdom) 75
Sweet Far Thing, The 96
Tales of Terror from the Black Ship 45
Talking Turkeys 32
Tar Man, The (Time Quake Trilogy) 69
Teach Your Granny to Text & Other Ways to Change the World 29
Teacher's Dead 95
Ten Things I Hate About Me 53
Thing with Finn, The 93
Tomorrow Seed, The (the Reaper Trilogy) 85
Top 10 of Everything 2009, The 26
Traitor's Gold (Nathan Fox) 50
Trap, The [Wray] 46
Trap, The [Smelcer] 88
Truth About Forever, The 54
Twister (Code Red Adventures) 88
Under the Skin 94
Unforgettable (It Girl) 99
Unwind 41
Urgum and the Googoobah 67
Venom Rising (Global Intelligence Organisation) 82
Viper Club, The (S.T.O.R.M.) 83
Virus Attack (hero.com) 84
Watcher 82
Watchmen 62
Waves 55
Way I See It, The 55
Way of the Warrior, The (Young Samurai) 96
Ways to Live Forever 94
Weird 68
Werewolf versus Dragon 33
Whitaker's World of Facts 2009 26
Whortle's Hope (Deptford Mouselets) 47
Wicked Lovely 58
Workhouse (My Story) 72
World's Best Book, The 28
Wow! 29
Yellowcake Conspiracy, The 80
Yes Man 68
Young Inferno, The 30
Zoe and Chloe: Out to Lunch 58

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